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A SHEET
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AMERICAN POLITICS.

THE President's Message has a little additional interest for us this time, because, in the course of the Reform discussion, much reference has been made to American institutions. In the nature of things, the two countries must always be sometimes examples, and sometimes warnings, to each other; yet with an under-current of mutual interest and sympathy lying deeper than ordinary politics reach. For our own parts, we have always respected American institutions, in America—and preferred our own, at home. But it is not to-day—on Christmas-day—that we are likely to take any pleasure in looking at the shady side of a great country, whose people is related to us; and we choose the President's Message for discussion, only because of its intrinsic importance, and in the hope that whatever is there spoken of doubtfully about his nation's future, may, by and by, result successfully for his nation's good.

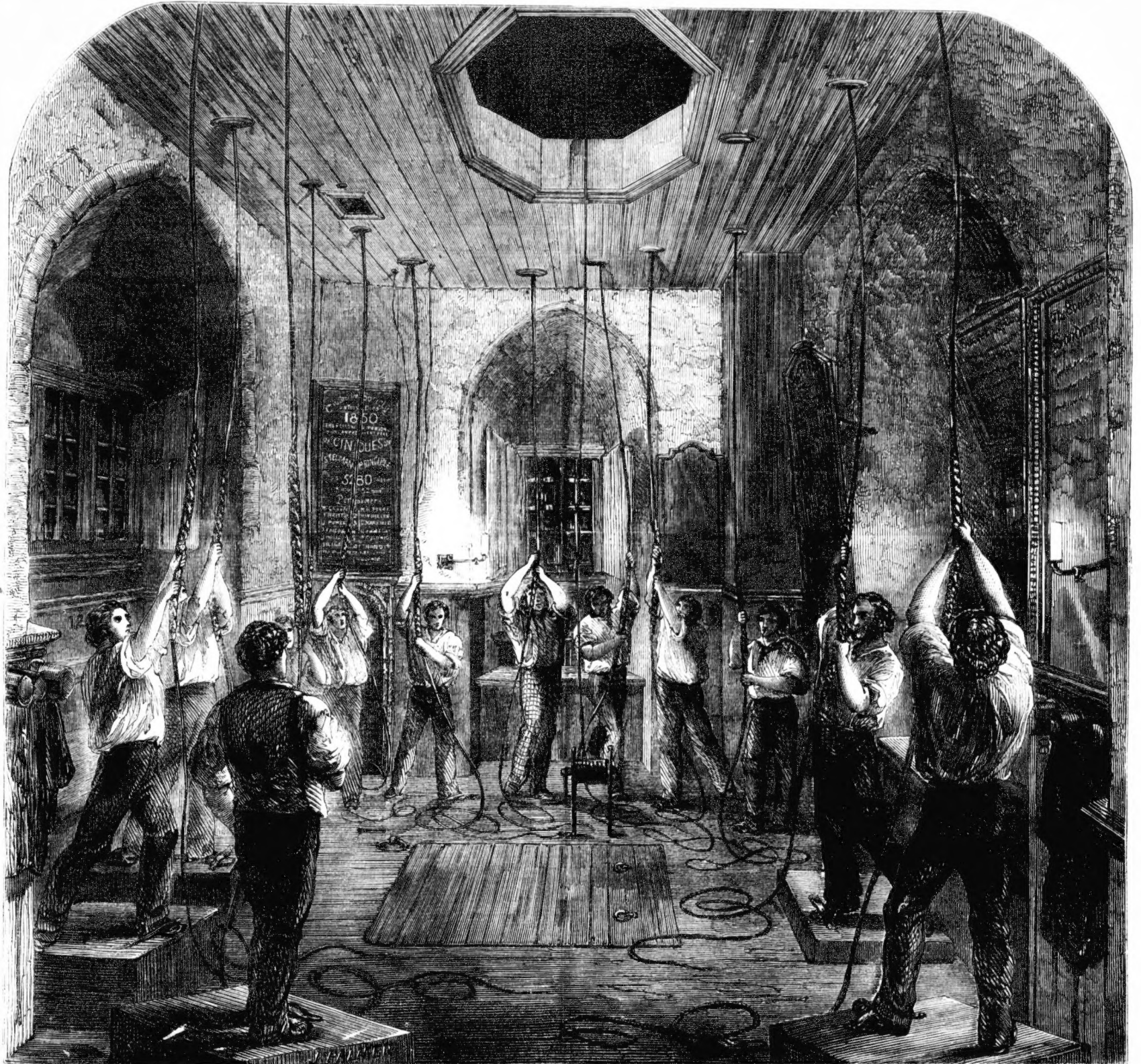
The Kansas affair, which opens the Message, has attracted little comparative notice in England, but in the States it produced an excitement of which we, now, can scarcely form an idea. Kansas, in fact, was in a state of civil war about the slavery question, fought for by the slavery and abolitionist parties, who burnt each other's ballot-boxes, and drove each other out by force. Mr. Buchanan speaks more warmly of its present condition than will be palatable to many thousands of his countrymen. As matters stand, Kansas is not eligible to be en-

rolled among the States until her population is more than doubled, and the slavery party, meanwhile, are pushing their cause in her with characteristic violence, and exciting a degree of indignation among the opposite party, such as we can fancy. What the President hopes, is, that the question of her entry into the States is postponed almost indefinitely; but from the tone of some journals there can be no doubt that this is premature, and that the agitation will be renewed. Here we have the great difficulty of the union; whenever a chance offers, slavery establishes itself in a new territory; and with all the talk of the northmen about their superiority, it is certain, from their own admission, that the south always beats them in politics. Few general readers of this message would guess that the Kansas paragraphs virtually mean that slavery has achieved a Kansas triumph so far, and yet this is exactly the state of the case. What the end of it all will be, nobody in America even pretends to know, and on this side of the Atlantic we can do nothing but hope that some statesman may arise capable of meeting the situation before it is too late.

The reference to Utah opens up a curious picture of the condition of the far-away parts of a young country. Coming just after the Kansas passage, it gives the strange effect of a civil war, caused by one barbarous institution, polygamy, following on a civil war caused by another barbarous institution, slavery. The Mormon scoundrels are, however, reduced to obedience; and,

indeed, in both cases, if one is shocked by the contrast which the social condition presents to that of highly-civilised countries, one is struck also by the immense range of American territory and population, and by the control exercised over the wildest parts by a government that is not older than the time of our grandfathers.

We pass over the paragraphs relating to China and Japan, where the Government of Washington is taking an honourable share of the work—to come to the President's view of his country's relation to Great Britain. There is a little jealousy of us in America, no doubt, but the kindness of all the best part of the population towards this country is deep and sincere. The story of our yielding in the "search" question is modestly told, on the whole. When it comes, however, to the point how we are to do ourselves justice in the case of vessels falsely assuming the American flag, Mr. Buchanan can give us no help. He has declined "the responsibility" of making any suggestion for the purpose; perhaps, feeling that a little squabble now and then with this country (meaning no great mischief, but tickling the pride of the mob) is too valuable for "Bunkum" purposes to be sacrificed by American statesmen. The Clayton-Bulwer complications, it seems, are still unsettled; on this matter he says little, and what he does say has nothing minatory about it, so we may safely leave the dull controversy (often discussed in these columns) till it turns up again in its own time.



CHRISTMAS BELLS: INTERIOR OF THE BELFRY OF CRIPPLEGATE CHURCH.—(DRAWN BY J. FALMER.)

Perhaps as important a portion of the Message as any, is that relating to Spain. With that Power the Americans have old and long-standing grievances; and grievances which we do not think they would be sorry to make a cause of war. In her decadent state, Spain would be just the country for the Young Republic to try her "stripes" on; and the rich island of Cuba hangs before her temptingly like a pear, ripe to yellowness, within sight of a hungry boy. The President talks wonderfully frankly about Cuba this time. "Cuba is almost within sight of our shores. . . . Cuba is a constant source of injury and annoyance to the American people." When he adds, as a grievance, that "it is the only spot in the civilised world where the African slave trade is tolerated," one is tempted to grin. How long would it be, if the States gained Cuba, before there would be Yankee importers of slaves in the island; especially when the pinch for want of the supply began to be felt? Negotiations, it seems, are again to be renewed for its purchase from Spain; nor can we wonder, under the circumstances, that the Americans should be impatient on the subject. By and by, this question will excite more attention in Europe than it does now; and England may have to decide where her sympathies shall be in a dispute between the Union and the Old World.

When the President talks of Mexico—of Arizona—of the Isthmus—of Costa Rica—of New Granada—there is one deep current of purpose and tendency running through all he writes. The case is put as plausibly as possible. These countries are anarchic, imbecile, used-up; they cannot pay the States their debts; in the case of Mexico, a "temporary protectorate" over part of her territories is proposed; and in all cases, negotiations of a querulous kind are going on. In short, the Republic of Northern-European is encroaching upon the Republics of Southern-European origin, like a sea. This aspect of American policy is less interesting to Europe than any other; however curious as a chapter in the general history of mankind. All we have to do with it is to insist on our transit and other rights in the Isthmus—but we need not affect a sympathy which we do not feel with the bastard slips of the once great Spanish empire. If they cannot govern themselves, they must pay the usual penalty—the inflexible historical penalty which all countries under such circumstances have paid. Perhaps the feature of most importance in the matter is, that the spread of American influence everywhere on its own continent tends to increase the race's arrogance towards Europe, and the difficulty of making it amenable to civilised public law. But this, too, carries its own remedy within itself, and will, in time, work outwardly on the great Republic any unfairness of which she is guilty towards her decadent sister Republics of the west.

On the whole, reverting to our first remark that this Message will be more discussed than usual at the present time, we find little in it that tells particularly *pro* or *con* the reform question. The circumstances of the two countries are so different that servile imitation of one by the other, politically, would be absurd. The wide material prosperity, the vast range of country, the rapidity of growth, are elements in the States which England cannot imitate any more than she can make the Thames into a Mississippi. They are elements which admit of a kind of government for which we literally have no room. But, on the other hand, what we do in Government (as in everything) is more finished than what America produces; and we must be content with that kind of success, with a civilisation not richer perhaps, but more complete and refined, and better organised. Yet, why push such comparisons too far? Better to celebrate the season and close the year by wishing "happy returns" of both to the country whose President has just sent us his voluminous and important state paper.

THE CHRISTMAS BELLS AT CRIPPLEGATE.

To some men is given a special aptitude for solving mathematical problems, and to others for playing the fiddle. And yet there are many not otherwise naturally obtuse, whom no amount of tuition seems of any avail in rendering proficient in those arts. Now bell-ringing—change-ringing—seem to us to be of the "mysteries," which are innately given, and which cannot be artistically acquired. Study and practice will no doubt perfect the neophyte in bell-ringing, as even a Tennyson may not disdain to polish his harmonious numbers by comparison with the stanzas of a Walter or a Cowley; but the first comprehensive grasp of the art must be intuitive. There must be some strange seduction, too, in the subtle craft of bell-ringing, which renders the adepts therein thoroughgoing enthusiasts. There does not, certainly, seem any special attraction in standing in one's shirt-sleeves in a cold belfry on a wintry night, and tugging away at huge bell-ropes in order to produce a deafening, clanging noise overhead.

Behold the Christmas spectator in the interior of the old belfry of the older church of St. Giles's, Cripplegate, and the "youths"—why on earth are they called "youths?"—are lustily peeling away at the Christmas chimes. A lonely place enough this belfry must be, when the ringers are absent; a weird spectral-looking deserted hive, with the ropes ghastly pendulous, or heaped in snaky coils. And full of curious old reminiscences, too, is this gray church of St. Giles's, Cripplegate. Two centuries ago, the neighbourhood of the famous old church was inhabited by a much more fashionable class of persons than at present condescend to hold their residence therein. Once lordly mansions are now let in miserable tenements to the poor. Grub Street, whose unsavoury cognomen has since been changed into Milton Street, would once have contained the needy poets and hack-writers who, at a later period of its history, found refuge within its precincts. The environs of the church contain, even with the rage for modern improvements, many vestiges of old London; and it is worth the while both of the antiquary and the lover of the picturesque to come betimes and listen to "the chimes at midnight." If the moon happens to be behind the gray church tower, and the air be still, the effect, both of sight and sound, is singularly fine.

In St. Giles's Church lies buried the immortal author of "Paradise Lost." Many and many a time, many a Christmas-eve, must the glorious old blind man have listened to the chimes from the antique belfry. He did not compose his magnificent "Hymn to the Nativity" while a resident in Cripplegate; those deathless lines were written ere yet death had fallen upon him; but as the familiar chimes came stealing on his ear—the sense of hearing quickened by the loss of sight—how often must his mind have reverted, not with bitter sorrow, but with a chastened resignation, to the days when his eyes could wander over the beauties of nature—beauties on which he has expatiated so exquisitely in his hymn!

SMALLPOX IN THE CHANNEL SQUADRON.—The "United Service Gazette," says—"A case of smallpox made its appearance on board one of the ships of the Channel squadron, some time ago. As the disease declared itself before the squadron left Bantey, the man might have been landed and sent to sick quarters at Bantey. This was not done. The ship left for Queenstown, but instead of making the best of her way thither under steam, and immediately sending the case to the hospital—her course recommended—the ship was put out and the ship proceeded leisurely under sail, making a long passage. The patient was kept some days on board the ship after her arrival at Queenstown, and on y landed to die. Other cases subsequently made their appearance, but were kept on board. The ship has not been quarantined, neither have any precautions been taken to prevent the spread of this dreadful scourge."

Foreign Intelligence.

FRANCE.

The Grand Duke Constantine arrived in Paris on Monday afternoon. He was received at the terminus of the Lyons Railway by the Russian Ambassador. He dined at the Tuileries in the evening, and visited the *Grand Opéra*.

It is stated that the Government intends to propose that the "indemnity" to deputies shall not be a certain sum per month during the sessions, as heretofore, but 10,000 francs a year, which is what the Deputies under the first empire were paid.

SPAIN.

M. BAYET, the new French Ambassador, has been received by the Queen with great ceremony.

A debate took place in the Spanish Senate on the 13th on the present serious quarrel between Spain and Mexico. The commission charged with presenting to the Senate the reply to the speech from the Throne paraphrased the rather threatening paragraph relating to Mexico. General Prim moved an amendment to this effect:—

"The Senate have seen with much regret that our differences with Mexico still subsist. Those differences would have had a pacific solution if her Majesty's Government had been animated by a conciliatory and just spirit. The Senate are of opinion that the origin of those differences is unworthy of the Spanish nation, and therefore they see with pain warlike preparations made by your Majesty's Government, as the force of arms will never give us the force of right, which we have not."

The Spanish Ministry, in reply to General Prim, said that the passage in the Royal speech that brought the General out did not mean what he understood it to mean, but simply asserted that, in case the negotiations still carried on with England and France, and through them with the Republic, remained without result, then Spain was prepared for war. In the end the amendment was rejected; the General alone voting for it.

PORTUGAL.

The Portuguese Government has energetically refused to communicate to the Chamber of Deputies certain documents concerning the Charles-et-George affair, which had been asked for.

SWITZERLAND.

A STARTLING piece of news has come to hand—namely, the invasion of Swiss territory by a detachment of French troops. These troops went into the valley of the Duppes, and advanced towards St. Cergues. Switzerland demands explanation from France. The elements of a pretty nice international misunderstanding may be founded by this affair.

ITALY.

THE Austrian re-inforcements in Lombardy are stated at about 8,000 men.

The Archduke Maximilian and his wife have been grossly insulted in the streets of Milan by a man of the lower orders—a feldino or porter. They had alighted from their carriage in the vicinity of the Porta Vigentina, one of the most lonely parts of the faubourg, and were taking exercise on foot, followed by two servants, when the man approached them, and addressed to them, point-blank, some very offensive epithets. The Archduke, naturally indignant, proceeded to the nearest police-station, made his declaration, and the offender was shortly afterwards identified and arrested. It is said, and commonly believed in Milan, that he was summarily punished by a flogging.

A curious demonstration took place at Pavia, on the 11th, when a large number of citizens and students paraded the principal streets, each with the stump of a clay pipe in his mouth, the bowl being empty and turned downwards; signifying thereby that the procession represented the funeral of a pipe, and all those who had taken part in it pledging themselves to forswear tobacco.

TURKEY AND THE EAST.

ANOTHER change in the Turkish ministry is expected. Fuad Pacha, well known to be attached to French interests, is named as the coming Grand Vizier; and the name of Riza Pacha, who is at present entrusted with the restoration of the finances, and who performs this task with evident earnestness and no mean ability, is mentioned.

By further intelligence about the arrest at Jeddah, we learn that so far from Namik Pacha being among the arrested, it was he himself who made the seizures. He aims probably at leaving as little as possible to do to his successor, who is on his way to Jeddah.

A letter from Belgrade, of the 12th, says:—"On the occasion of the assembling of the Skoptschina a salvo of cannon was fired last evening, and this morning the Serbian troops were drawn up in front of the cathedral, and a large crowd assembled there. Shortly after the Prince arrived in a carriage escorted by Lancers, and was received at the entrance to the church by the Metropolitan, by two bishops, and the clergy, who accompanied him in procession to a place in the church. Divine service was then celebrated, and the Metropolitan preached a sermon, in which he defined the sense of the word 'liberty.' Afterwards there was a grand reception at the palace. A grand banquet is to be given to-day by the Prince to the National Assembly."

The Forte has published a note in which it excuses itself for having admitted the American frigate *Wabash* to the Dardanelles, and promises for the future to adhere strictly to the Paris treaty.

A Russian fort has fallen into the hands of the Circassians, who were led by Sefer Pacha's son.

AMERICA.

THE great topic in America is of course the President's Message. An abstract of its contents will be found in another column.

In the House of Representatives, on the 7th, a resolution requesting the President to take such steps as may, in his judgment, be best calculated to effect a speedy abrogation of the Clayton-Bulwer Treaty, was, by a small majority, referred to a committee of the whole on the state of the Union. This resolution was at the last sessions reported from the Committee on Foreign Affairs.

Miss Polydore, the young English girl who was recently rescued from the Mormons, had been placed under the care of Lord Napier.

M. DE MONTALEMBERT'S APPEAL.

THE appeal of M. de Montalembert was heard on Tuesday. The Court reduced the sentence of imprisonment from six to three months, but confirmed the fine of 3,000 francs.

THE BRUSSELS "Independence" asserts that England, France, and Spain, have agreed to make a joint expedition against the Riff pirates next spring.

THE SUEZ RAILWAY.—The railway between Suez and Alexandria is now finished; its first travellers were passengers from Australia to England. On some parts of the journey by rail they travelled at the rate of forty miles an hour. One of the most difficult and important railways in the world, and which has been some years forming, is now completed, and the short route to India, China, Japan, and Australia can now be traversed by railway and steam-packet throughout.

THE FRENCH IN THE FRIENDLY ISLES.—The New Zealand papers contain an account of an aggression of the French at the Friendly Isles. It appears that on the 7th of July last some French priests landed at Lifuka, on the Haabai group of islands, and insisted on leaving one of their number there to promote the Catholic faith. The native Governor said that strangers could not settle there without the consent of the King, who was then at Tonga. The French priests then left for Tonga, where a French frigate was lying; and, on the ground that the Governor of Haabai's refusal was in violation of a treaty with the French, the King was compelled to agree to the following paper:—"I, Tupua, King of the Archipelago of Tonga, promise—1. To depose Josiah, Governor of the Haabai Islands, for not having allowed the Catholic missionaries to land at Lifuka, on the 8th of July. 2. To convey to Lifuka, in the month of August, the fathers, their servants, and their luggage required for the establishment of a Catholic station on the island, the fathers and servants being chosen by the Rev. Father Cheveron." The King also promised to build a mission-house for the French missionaries.

THE PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE.

THE annual Message of the President of the United States has been published.

He enters at great length into the history of the troubles in Kansas, which he ascribes solely and emphatically to the refusal of the people of that territory to join in the voting for delegates to the convention who have to frame a constitution, and their subsequent refusal to acknowledge the authority of the convention so elected; but he hopes that by waiting a short time, and acting in obedience to law, Kansas will slide into the union without the slightest impediment.

The history of the course pursued towards the Mormons occupies a considerable portion of the Message. The President praises the efforts of the commissioners, Governor Cumming and Colonel Kane, the winning pacificator; and, as a result of the measures taken, says—

"The Governor and other civil officers of Utah are now performing appropriate functions without resistance. The authority of the constitution and the laws has been fully restored, and peace prevails throughout the territory. A portion of the troops sent to Utah are now encamped in the Valley, forty-four miles south-west of Salt Lake City, and the remainder have been ordered to Oregon to suppress Indian hostilities. I recognize that the benefits of our land laws, and pre-emption system, are extended to the people of Utah, by the establishment of a land office in that territory."

After defending the course of the Government in the Chinese question, the President passes on to the consideration of the Clayton-Bulwer Treaty:—

"I am truly sorry I cannot also inform you that the complications between Great Britain and the United States, arising out of the Clayton-Bulwer Treaty of April 1850, have been finally adjusted. At the commencement of your last session I had reason to hope that, emancipating themselves from further unavailing discussions, the two Governments would proceed to settle the Central American question in a practical manner, and to the honourable and satisfactory to both; and this hope I have not yet abandoned. In my last annual Message, I stated that overtures had been made by the British Government for this purpose, in a friendly spirit, which I reciprocated. Their proposal was to withdraw these questions from negotiation between the two Governments; but to accomplish this object, by a negotiation between the British Government and each of the Central American republics whose territorial interests are immediately involved. The settlement was to be made in accordance with the tenor of the interpretation placed upon the Clayton and Bulwer Treaty by the United States, with certain modifications. As negotiations are still pending upon this basis, it would not be proper for me now to comment upon their present condition. A final settlement of these questions is greatly to be desired, as this would wipe out the last remaining subject of dispute between the two countries."

The relations of the United States with Spain form perhaps the most important topic of the present Message.

"With Spain our relations remain in an unsatisfactory condition. The mission to Spain has been entrusted to a distinguished citizen of Kentucky, who will proceed to Madrid without delay, and make another and last attempt to obtain justice from that Government. Spanish agents, under the direct control of the Captain-General of Cuba, have inflicted numerous injuries on the persons and property of our citizens. All our attempts to obtain redress have been baffled and defeated. The frequent and recurring changes in the Spanish ministry have been employed as a means of delay. We have been compelled to wait, again and again, until the new minister shall have had time to investigate the justice of our demands."

The claims are of fourteen years' standing; in which about one hundred American citizens are interested for duties illegally exacted in Cuba are brought forward, and it is complained that instead of a just restitution of the original sum extorted, with interest, about one-third of the amount is offered, and that as a special favour. The President also points out as an intolerable grievance that while injustice is done at Havannah, Americans demanding justice are referred to Madrid. Then comes the following important passage:—

"The truth is, that Cuba, in its existing colonial condition, is a constant source of injury and annoyance to the American people. It is the only spot in the civilised world where the African slave trade is tolerated; and where, bound by treaty with Great Britain to maintain a naval force on the coast of Africa, at much expense both of life and treasure, solely for the purpose of arresting slaves bound to that island. The late serious difficulties between the United States and Great Britain respecting the right of search, now so happily terminated, could never have arisen if Cuba had not afforded a market for slaves. As long as this market shall remain open, there can be no hope for the civilisation of benighted Africa. Whilst the demand for slaves continues in Cuba, wars will be waged among the petty and barbarous chiefs in Africa, for the purpose of seizing subjects to supply this trade. In such a condition of affairs, it is impossible that the light of civilisation and religion can ever penetrate these dark abodes. It has been made known to the world by my predecessors, that the United States have, on several occasions, endeavoured to acquire Cuba from Spain by honourable negotiation. If this were accomplished, the last relic of the African slave trade would instantly disappear. We would not, if we could, acquire Cuba in any other manner. This is due to our national character. All the territory which we have acquired since the origin of the government, has been by fair purchase from France, Spain, and Mexico, or by the free and voluntary act of the independent State of Texas, in blending her destinies with our own. This course we shall ever pursue, unless circumstances should occur, which we do not now anticipate, rendering a departure from it clearly justified, under the imperative and overruling law of self-preservation. The island of Cuba, from its geographical position, commands the mouth of the Mississippi, and the immense and annually increasing trade, foreign and coastwise, from the valley of that noble river, now embracing half the sovereign states of the union. With that island under the dominion of a distant foreign Power, this trade, of vital importance to these states, is exposed to the danger of being destroyed in the time of war, and it has hitherto been subjected to perpetual injury and annoyance in time of peace. Our relations with Spain, which ought to be of the most friendly character, must always be placed in jeopardy whilst the existing colonial government over the island shall remain in its present condition. Whilst the position of the island would be of vast importance to the United States, its value to Spain is comparatively unimportant. The publicity which has been given to our former negotiations upon this subject, and the large appropriation which may be required to effect the purpose, render it expedient, before making another attempt to renew the negotiation, that I should lay the whole subject before Congress. This is especially necessary, as it may become indispensable success that I should be entrusted with the means of making an advance to the Spanish Government immediately after the signing of the treaty, subject awaiting the ratification of it by the Senate. I refer the whole subject to Congress, and commend it to their careful consideration."

The President reviews the state and position of Mexico. He sets the truth is that this fine country, blessed with a productive soil and a benign climate, has been reduced by civil dissension to a condition of almost hopeless anarchy and imbecility, and that it would be vain for his government to attempt to enforce payment in money of the claims of American citizens, now amounting to more than ten millions of dollars, because she is destitute of all pecuniary means to satisfy those demands. As a set-off to all the claims and grievances which he considers undoubtedly furnish abundant cause for resorting to hostilities against the government still holding possession of the capital, the President suggests that the government of the United States should assume a temporary protectorate over the northern portions of Chihuahua and Sonora, and establish military posts within the same—the protection to be withdrawn as soon as local government shall be established in those Mexican States capable of performing their duties to the United States, restraining the lawless, and preserving peace along the border. The question of the political condition of the narrow isthmus of Central America, through which transit routes pass between the Atlantic and Pacific oceans, he considers a subject of deep interest to all commercial nations. To the United States he says they are of invaluable importance, their possessions extending throughout seventeen degrees on the Pacific coast, embracing the important state of California and the flourishing territories of Oregon and Washington. He considers that the States in whose possession these routes are have no right to arrest or retard their use by other nations any more than if they were arms of the sea, for that they are highways, in which they have little interest when compared with the vast interests of the world. He earnestly recommends to Congress the passage of an act authorising the President, under such restrictions as they may deem proper, to employ the land and naval forces of the United States in preventing the transit from being obstructed or closed by lawless violence, and in protecting the lives and property of American citizens travelling thereupon, requiring at the same time that those forces shall be withdrawn the

moment the danger shall have passed away. The Panama and Tehuantepec route, he says also requires similar protection.

The President recapitulates the griefs of the United States government against Costa Rica and Nicaragua, arising out of the transaction at Virgin Bay, in April, 1856, when the country being then in a state of war, with General William Walker in the land, some American citizens, alleged by the President to have been murdered, were from long negotiations have taken place, and unless his demands are complied with, "other measures" will be resorted to. The difficulties with New Granada are represented as being in a fair way of arrangement.

Nothing new is said about the expedition to Paraguay. A hope is expressed that the Commissioner who accompanies the naval forces will convince the Paraguayan government that it is bound to make, voluntarily and promptly, atonement for the wrongs done to American citizens, in connection with the attack on the steamer *Water Witch*. Should this hope be disappointed, force must be employed to obtain "just satisfaction." (These words are thus distinguished by inverted commas in the Message) from Paraguay. But the President repeats his hope that this will not be necessary.

The commercial crisis of last winter is thus adverted to:—

"When Congress met in December last, the business of the country had not been crushed by one of those periodical revulsions which are the inevitable consequence of our unsound and extravagant system of bank credit and inflated currency. With all the elements of national wealth and industry, our manufactures were suspended, our useful public and private enterprises were arrested, and thousands of labourers were deprived of employment and reduced to want. Universal distress prevailed among the commercial, manufacturing, and mechanical classes. This revulsion was felt more severely in the United States, because similar causes had produced the like deplorable effects throughout the remainder of nations of Europe. . . . The whole commercial world seemed on the verge of being hurled into this catastrophe; . . . and the general causes existing throughout the world could not have been controlled by the laws of any particular country. The periodical revulsions which have existed in our past history must continue to return at intervals, so long as our present unwholesome system of bank credit and inflated currency is not to be reformed. It is the less to be feared, that the commercial nations of Europe, with whose interests our own are so materially involved, will expose themselves to similar calamities. I respectfully renew my recommendation in favour of the passage of a national bankruptcy law applicable to banking institutions. This is the direct remedy for the subject which, I believe, the Federal Government possesses, such a law would mitigate, though it might not prevent, the excess. The instinct of self-preservation might produce a wholesome restraint upon their banking business, if they knew, in advance, that a suspension of specie payments would inevitably produce their civil death. But the checks of the regulation are now slowly but surely passing away. . . . It is vain, however, to disguise the fact from ourselves that a speculative inflation in our currency, without a corresponding inflation in other countries whose manufactures come into competition with our own, must ever produce disastrous results to our domestic manufactures."

The remaining portion of the President's Message is occupied chiefly, although not exclusively, with the finances of the Republic and their administration.

PRESIDENT BUCHANAN ON THE UNION.

The centennial celebration of the occupancy of Fort Duquesne and Pitt was held at Pittsburgh on the 25th of November last. Among the letters of excuse for non-attendance was one from the President of the United States; in which he says:—

"From the stand-point at which we have arrived, the anxious patriot cannot fail, while reviewing the past, to cast a glance into the future, and to speculate upon what may be the condition of our beloved country when our posterity shall assemble to celebrate the second centennial anniversary of the capture of Fort Duquesne. Shall our whole country then compose one united nation, more populous, powerful, and free than any other which has ever existed? Or will the federal have been rent asunder, and divided into groups of hostile and jealous States? Or may it not be possible that the next celebration, all the fragments, exhausted by unrelenting conflicts with each other, may have finally reunited, and sought refuge under the shelter of one great and overshadowing despotism?"

"These questions will, I firmly believe, under the providence of God, be virtually decided by the present generation. We have reached a crisis when upon their action depend the preservation of the Union, according to the letter and spirit of the constitution, and this once gone, all is lost."

"I regret to say that the present omens are far from propitious. In the last age of the republic it was considered almost treasonable to pronounce the word 'disunion.' Times have since sadly changed, and now disunion is freely prescribed as the remedy for evanescent evils, real or imaginary, which, if left to themselves, would speedily vanish away in the progress of events."

"Our revolutionary fathers have passed away, and the generation next after them, who were inspired by their personal counsel and example, have nearly all disappeared. The present generation, deprived of these lights, must, whether they will or not, decide the fate of their posterity. Let them cherish the Union in their heart of hearts—let them resist every measure which may tend to relax or dissolve its bonds—let the citizens of different States cultivate feelings of kindness and forbearance towards each other—and let all resolve to transmit it to their descendants in the form and spirit they have inherited from their forefathers, and all will then be well for our country in future time."

"I shall assume the privilege of advancing years in reference to another growing and dangerous evil. In the last age, although our fathers, like ourselves, were divided into political parties which often had severe conflicts with each other, yet we never heard until within a recent period of the employment of money to carry elections. Should this practice increase until the voters and their representatives in the state and national legislatures shall become infected, the fountain of free government will then be poisoned at its source, and we must end, as history proves, in a military despotism. A democratic republic, all agree, cannot long survive unless sustained by public virtue. When this is corrupted and the people become venal, there is a canker at the root of the tree of liberty, which will cause it to wither and to die."

THE QUARREL BETWEEN THE UNITED STATES AND PARAGUAY.—There is but little actual discrepancy in the state of facts on which the American Government and that of Paraguay rest respectively. That the United States surveying steamer *Water Witch* was fired on by one of the Paraguayan forts (Itapiru) is not questioned. The only point at issue is, was the Paraguayan Government justified in endorsing that hostile act? The American Government holds the negative of that proposition on two grounds—first, that Paraguay was the owner but of one bank of the river of that name, and consequently had no right to prohibit, as she did by a decree of October, 1854, foreign vessels of war from navigating it; and, second, that the *Water Witch* was not, properly speaking, a vessel of war, but was engaged in a scientific enterprise for the advantage of commercial states generally. President Lopez justifies the act on the ground that the channel through which the *Water Witch* was passing was not the regular channel of the river, which was common both to Paraguay and Corrientes, but was a small course between an island occupied by Paraguay for military purposes on the Paraguayan bank; that vessels were expressly prohibited from passing through that channel; that the *Water Witch* was hailed by the officer in command of the fort, and ordered to return; that no heed was paid to this order; that then a blank discharge was fired from the fort, and no notice taken of it; that then a shotted gun was fired, but not aimed at her, striking her to; and that she responded in round shot and canister, until she got out of range. Thus stands the case of the *Water Witch*. The other ground of complaint against Paraguay is not such a serious one, nor is it altogether so well founded. It arises out of a mere personal quarrel between a French agent, Lopez, and the United States Consul at Paraguay under President Lopez. This gentleman added to his consular duties the agency of an American manufacturing and navigation company in Asuncion. At first Lopez and the company were on the most friendly terms, and all manner of privileges and facilities were granted to the enterprise, including, it is said, a loan of 15,000 dollars by Lopez to the company, and which was never repaid. Subsequently disagreements arose, and the enterprise proved a failure. It is charged against Lopez that he violated and trampled upon the rights of American citizens in his desire to injure the interests of this manufacturing and navigation company. On the other hand, it is alleged that the offence came from the other quarter; that the conduct of our consular representative and his friends in Asuncion was the reverse of equitable, and that Lopez's action in respect to them was merely negative, and not a thing for which he can be properly held accountable.

A Dr. Beck, of Dantzig, is said to have found an antidote for ardent spirits. It is a mineral paste, which he encloses in an olive. "Galliano" is the doctor tested his discovery on a drunken Pole, who drank three bottles of brandy, taking an olive after each bottle. He experienced none of the effects of drunkenness.

THE INDIAN REVOLT.

By the arrival of the Bombay mail we have intelligence up to November 19.

Tantia Topce, at the date of our last news from Bombay, was causing considerable curiosity (and apprehension in some quarters) by his crossing of the Nerbudda, and threatened invasion of the Deccan. It seems certain that, on or about the 20th ultimo, he crossed the river at a ford called Sonali, near Dhurghat, about forty miles from Hoshangabad. He marched to Pithypore, which he took possession of on the 1st instant, but learning that Lieutenant Kerr and his South Malabar Horse were approaching, and fearing that they were but the advance guard of a large army, he evacuated the fort on the 2nd, and on the 3rd it was quietly taken possession of by Lieutenant Kerr, who could not, single-handed, carry on the chase further, as his band had been reduced, through various causes, from 500 to 350. He therefore lay upon his arms in Pithypore, until the arrival of assistance. It has been ascertained that Tantia had taken a short cut through the mountains behind Pithypore, informed thereof by the double-dealing Rajah of that place, and visited Mooltaye, and, recrossing the Taptée, to the north, had plundered Peepode on the 15th, Kandwa, in Nimar, on the 17th, and was making for the Nerbudda, the lords of which, however, were now effectively guarded by our troops. Tantia had signified his arrival in the different towns by hanging several policemen and peons who were adherents of our cause, and at Mooltaye an unfortunate Jolshidar was executed by him. Every possible arrangement, we are assured, has been made to hem round this troublesome fellow.

In the great province of Oude, one of the greatest firebrands we have to contend with is Beni Mahdo Singh, who cannot have less than 50,000 men, more or less efficient, at his beck and call, in different parts of the district. His headquarters have been the strong fort of Simree, from which he has been in the habit of sallying forth with large parties to attack British stations that were supposed to be weak. For example, he recently made an attempt on our post at Poorwa, when the fighting for hours was very severe, grape being expended at a distance of 200 yards. Beni Mahdo was driven back, and returned to the protection of his entrenchments at Simree, where he had 21,000 men and seventeen guns. It has since been reported that Simree itself has been captured by Brigadier Keeligh, with a loss to the enemy of 250, and to us of two Europeans killed and four wounded, "but," says the "Bombay Gazette," "we suspect this report only refers to some outworks of the fort, as our troops could hardly have escaped a more severe loss in an encounter with the full strength of the garrison."

In the north of Oude, on the 20th of October, an engagement took place between one of our columns and a rebel force of about 20,000 men under various leaders, plentifully supplied apparently with munitions of war. The keenness of the struggle may be understood when we mention that it commenced at dawn, and lasted till three o'clock in the afternoon. The result was disastrous to the enemy. They left nearly 1,800 dead and wounded on the field, and most of their guns (they had thirteen) and ammunition.

On the 21st of October, the fort of Birwa, near Sundeloh, was captured by Brigadier Barker, after an investment of several days. The garrison, headed by two chiefs (who escaped), Golab Singh and Teloke Singh, made a sturdy resistance. Our victory was dearly purchased, for in killed and wounded we lost from 80 to 100. Among the wounded were the Brigadier himself, Captain Dawson (since we regret to say, dead), and Captain Carnegie, of the Engineers, who was injured when blowing up the gates in the fort. The enemy are said to have lost 500 in killed and wounded, besides a number of guns, a quantity of ammunition, &c., which fell into our hands.

On the 23rd of October, an attempt was made to wrest from us the fort of Durbala, which was taken by our troops some time ago with considerable trouble. A large force of rebels marched against the fort, but the garrison did not wait their arrival within the walls, but sallied forth to slay their intended visitors in the plain. The result was, that the latter were punished for their temerity by the loss of 200 men and their guns.

On the 20th of October, a similar attempt was made by Meer Mehudee Hossain on our station at Sultanpore, with a force reported at 6,000 strong. Brigadier Horsford did not wish to give the enemy the trouble of coming all the way, and therefore went out to meet him with a force of European and native cavalry, 400 European infantry, and a police cavalry regiment. The struggle was a short one; the enemy fled to the friendly jungles after the first shock, leaving 200 killed and wounded, and two guns in the field.

On the 27th of October, when Brigadier Barker was marching towards the strong fort of Rohia, with the determination to besiege it, it was suddenly evacuated by Nurput Singh and the 4,000 rebels who constituted the garrison. Barker demolished the fort.

About the same time, Omrao Singh of Kantha was met at Patun Behar by a force under Major Bulwer, and totally defeated, with a loss of 250 killed and wounded. The leader escaped to Simree.

Of Brigadier Smith's column we learn, that by a forced march of eighteen miles from near Mongroolee to Dumgon on the 13th of Nov., and by starting again at three o'clock the next morning, they came on and surprised a party of the rebels, about 800 or 500 strong, four miles east of Rajpore, at daylight, and before even they had risen. Maun Singh, of Pardone and Powrie, was with them, but unfortunately escaped on horseback; his elephant also got away, but his shield and palkee fell into our hands. Between 500 and 600 were killed by the cavalry and infantry; the former pursued for six miles southward. The rebels had no guns, and such was their flight that swords, bundooks, bundles of clothes, tatooes, spears, camels, all were abandoned. Two Enfield rifles, one marked "Grenadier Company, 88th Regiment"—no doubt taken at Cawnpore—were captured by the 10th N.I.

On the 3rd of November a victory was gained over the enemy, which cannot be contemplated with unmixed gratification, in consequence of the sacrifices with which it was bought. The fort of Ramper Kussia, with five guns, was taken by Brigadier Wetherall after a hard contest, in which the garrison are described to have fought with great courage and endurance. The enemy did not lose more than 200 or 250, and the proportion of loss on our side was unprecedentedly severe, consisting of from 80 to 100 killed and wounded.

The Nusseerabad brigade of rebels have been giving serious annoyance to some of our stations. A body of our troops met them at Guneshpore on the 29th of October, when they (the rebels) were making for the Gogra, and, after two hours' hard fighting, completely routed them, and took from them their guns, baggage, &c.

These are the principal incidents that have taken place in the province of Oude. The Begum, with her son and her lover Munnoon, are still at Bournee. "She has a large force about her, and so difficult does she find it to solve the problem of making the two ends meet, that she is anxious to come to terms with our Government, but is held back by other chiefs, who fear that their crimes are beyond redemption." We hear nothing of the notorious Nena Sahib, except that he is at Churda, seventy-five miles north-east of Lucknow. Balra Rao, his brother, is more active. He is at Byraitch, but his main force of 12,000 men is at Burgadda Ghât, on the Gogra, about twelve miles north of Durriganj.

It is said that the object of the Commander-in-Chief is to clear the Baiswara country, now under the control of Beni Mahdo Singh, and so work gradually up in the direction of the Gogra river, while all the columns north of Lucknow work southwards in the same direction. It is further supposed that during the time we are pursuing this course, the Ghâts along the other bank of the Ganges will be scoured by a sufficient force to prevent, at least, the crossing of any stray bodies of the enemy.

Our troops have not been without discouragements, which no doubt the enemy have magnified into victories for themselves. A letter from Rustee, in the British district of Goruckpore, says:—"On the 27th of October a body of the Bengal Yeomanry Cavalry, perfectly surrounded by the rebels, lost a great deal of baggage, and had to retire with the loss of a great many wounded, two of whom were minus their legs. Many of the camp followers were carried off by the rebels. But the

most unfortunate affair of this kind is that which took place at Jugdespore, in the British district of Shahjád. A large force left Harrah on the 25th ultimo, under the command of Colonel Lord Kerr. Altogether he had over 700 men with him, and all other necessary means and appliances to boot, excepting, as it afterwards turned out, a sufficient supply of ammunition. The object of this formidable body was to capture the fort of Jugdespore, but when within 500 yards of the entrenchments, it was exposed to a severe fire from the garrison, and, says the account, "our ammunition became exhausted, it seems, and we retired, the enemy following us beautifully (for four or five miles, and keeping up a very hot fire. Some of our camp followers and baggage fell into their hands, and we returned to Harrah, very much fatigued. We lost seventeen wounded; Dr. Wilson, of the Naval Brigade, got his jaw broken. The enemy's loss was forty killed and about 100 wounded." How the enemy sustained such a loss in a duct in which they clearly played first fiddle, we cannot divine."

Accounts from Farhoo mention that the Bengal Government have refused permission to Sir Jung Bahadur, K. C. B., of Nepal, to bring more than 1,000 men with him on a pilgrimage he proposes making to the temple at Harjapore. He wished to bring 10,000 men, and it is said that he is greatly displeased with the non-compliance with his request.

The greased cartridge question is revived. Great excitement has been created in a regiment of military police at Lucknow in consequence of their finding Enfield cartridge-cases with pig's and cow's fat in the ammunition served up to them for service. Here were the greased cartridges in the cartons-boxes of Hindoos of all castes and of Mahometans—all repugnant to the fat of cow or pig! The native officers acted admirably; they searched the men's pouches, and had the Enfield packages removed, but some of the men cried bitterly, and seemed to think Government was bent on ruining them in this world and the next. The worst of the matter is this. The cartridges were no doubt placed among the other ammunition for the worst purposes by some scoundrels who had access to our magazines. An investigation into all the circumstances was taking place at Lucknow, and measures have been adopted to examine the ammunition in future, and to prevent the recurrence of such a dangerous event.

A difficulty has arisen in India with the European army of the Company. The army of the East India Company, recruited in Europe, consisted of some 20,000 British soldiers. At the time the Act which transferred India to the Crown was passed it appears to have occurred to Parliament that there would be some doubt as to the transfer to the Queen of the service of men enlisted for the Company, and in the 56th section, in order to meet the case, they expressly provided that the soldiers of the East India Company should serve the Queen as though they had continued in the service of the Company, with the same regulations as to pay, pensions, and emoluments. In several of the British regiments of the late Company, however, the men have declared that they held themselves quite free. The form of attestation of the Act under which these soldiers were enlisted expressly states that A. B. is willing "to serve the East India Company." Their oath is limited to such service. Can Parliament, then, by an Act transfer the obligations of that oath, and declare these men to be under the same obligations to serve the Queen as they incurred when they took the oath to the Company? Not that the soldiers want their discharge; they only see a chance of getting a bounty for re-enlistment in the Queen's service.

SOME CHRISTMAS FACES.

Did you ever dream that, shipwrecked, you were clinging to a spar or a hencoop in the midst of a raging sea of Faces? How they leapt up at you and curled about your own face, that was now bent forward in curiosity—now averted in terror! Some faces pliant, cheerful, sunny; some sad, mournful, gazing at you with pleading or unrepentant eyes; others unspeakably horrible, full of immortal hate, unslaked drought for blood, unavailing remorse, nameless agony and despair! Faces of dear friends, and of darling children dead long ago; faces of by-gone sweethearts now blooming matrons, of once fast friends now become deadly foes; faces that alive you never saw, but that are revealed to you only tossing on the unquiet ocean of dreams, and that appal you with their unreal reality of unconscious cognizance, baffling and perplexing you, coming unsummoned and departing you know not how or when—coming and going with the thoughts of the speeches that were never uttered on earth, and the strains of the music no mortal ears ever listened to! Glances of these faces, of the life you cannot remember, in any corporeal manner, to have lived since your memory began, but that you may have lived in a planet millions of miles distant, and thousands of years ago! You have been among these shadowy faces, dear reader, as your servant the scribe has.

Yes, and there are faces in the fire looming through the glowing caverns, the radiant crypts, the red-hot icicles that the Coal-king builds for us with his searing hands. And there are faces in the paper on the wall; there are faces in the night, as, in the whirling express train, we gaze from the window. There are faces in the clouds of brown, sered, autumn leaves that are caught up by the October blast. There are faces grinning in awful ghastliness on the tombstones of a midnight cemetery. There are faces in the waving boughs of summer trees as they sigh in the gentle breeze, the warm green-white moonlight streaming—murmuring faces, kind and loving, wooing you back to love and hope.

Very different from these visages, full of solemn, sometimes dreadful memories, are the genial patchwork, the kindly phantasmagoria of "Christmas Faces" which "our artist"—mysterious entity—has displayed as one of the "Christmas plates" in our annual feast. These faces are full of mirth and gaiety, of reasonable joy and laughter. See the postman who has brought the missive which the spruce housemaid so blithely takes in—though, let us hope, it is not yet Valentine's Day—and for which he receives a coin evidently bearing more the semblance of a Christmas-box than of the mulet for an unpaid letter. See the convivial guest at the Christmas banquet, holding up his glass to the glowing light, and marking the presence of the host's wing with criticising air. See the gleaming face of the jolly Jack Tar, coming back from the "Golden South Americas," with, we hope, stores of doubloons in his pocket. You will be good enough not to pass over the presence of that peculiarly comely sweetheart—she is a dress and mantle maker by profession, but will be some day the wife of a prosperous master mariner. See the "seven poor women" receiving their dole of bread and money, the ecclesiastical authorities and the smug parochial functionaries standing by; see Fatherfamilias somewhat gloomy over the "Christmas bills," including a monstrous one for millinery. We are afraid, by the seared looks of the young lady behind, that there are some items lurking in the ominous schedule, relative to point-lace parasols, and more antique double-caped mantles, reaching to the feet (for very cold weather you know), or, perchance, pocket handkerchiefs ordered at Ludlum's, trimmed with Valenciennes, regardless of expense, and embroidered with the crest and cypher in diamond dust. See the coachman driving stolidly through the snow; see the rosy cook, watching the progress of the Christmas pudding in the bubbling cauldron; see, fitting centre-piece to these Christmas faces, the pair of "young lovers," kissing under the mistletoe. Let no "ernel parient" separate this Wilkins and Dinah of genteel life. May their coldest "cup of poison" be the "loving cup," well spiced and flavoured, that passes round among friends and kinsmen at Christmas merry-makings. Fade away, then, ye jolly Christmas faces; and fade away in happy humour, for disappearing ye leave nought but smiles upon the faces that regard you.

CAPTURE OF A BRIGAND.—Accounts from Aleppo state that Mehmed Reza Pacha, the Governor-General of the province, has ordered a signal service by effecting the arrest of Karamat Osman Agha, a brigand chief, who, for the last twenty years, has been carrying on his depredations on the roads about that city. The terror he had everywhere inspired gained for him the name he bears, "The Son of the Black Giant."





A LETTER FROM AUSTRALIA.—(DRAWN BY FITZPATRICK.—SEE NEXT PAGE.)

CHRISTMAS DAY IN BARRACKS.

ONE would almost imagine that the usual daily monotonous routine of barrack-life would entirely extinguish the taste for domestic feelings and enjoyments, but that such is not the case, Christmas-day, in its

annual occurrence, amply testifies. On this day (at least in most regiments) the daily Government banquet of boiled ration-beef is superseded, and a goodly supply of beef, cooked at the nearest bakers, with plum pudding, is partaken of. But be it remarked this holiday enter-

tainment is paid for among the soldiers themselves, by subscription of a day or two's pay, aided by a donation of a guinea or two from the captain and officers of each company; to which is generally added a cask of beer, a few bottles of wine, &c. The daily routine is also



SOLDIERS BRINGING THEIR CHRISTMAS DINNER FROM THE COOK-HOUSE.—(DRAWN BY W. SHARP.)

broken by the presence of some of the fair sex—the wives of the men—who, dressed in their best, grace the board. Nor are the merry faces of juvenile heroes wanting to give a domestic air to the scene. The rooms also undergo a sort of transformation; and, under the united influence of evergreens and fancy pocket-handkerchiefs, present a by no means cheerless appearance. What, however, conduces most to the general effect of "being at home" is the presence of a table-cloth—the festive-board being guilts of such a piece of luxury on all the other 364 days of the year. The baked pie being fetched from the bakers', and the plum-pudding duly escorted from out the regimental boilers, the onslaught commences, and ere long the long-talked-of pudding presents the "small remains of beauty once admired." Whilst all this is going on, the colonel, accompanied by the officers of each company, visits each mess, and partakes of a glass of wine at one or two of them. The officers of each company also pay their own men a particular visit, when "his honour the captain" has to go through the ceremony of drinking their healths in a bumper of wine, handed to him by the fair hand of the belle of the messes, the wife or daughter of one of the men. After an appropriate speech, given in a general way, words of approval and encouragement to those who have been steady during the past year, and a mild but kind remonstrance to those who have not, he retires, and we don't know that the discipline suffers from it, it rather tends to promote a kindly feeling between the men and their officers, without which military life would be anything but agreeable. At Aldershot, and other places, Government are now erecting ovens, so that the men can, in turns, partake of at least a bake, if not a roast, in place of the everlasting boil.

PAT'S CHRISTMAS LETTER FROM THE DIGGINGS.

DEAR parents—I write ye this letter
(Ye'll see by the crass for my name);
If it reaches ye, so much the better,
It not, let me hear of the same;
If ye're living, of course, as my trust is—
If dead, though, for holy Pat's sake,
To believe, please to do me the justice—
I couldn't get home to your wake!

It's a mighty rum place this Australia—
They say many thousand miles wide—
But its health must be rather a failure,
Considering it's got no inside;
Or, at least, to get at its interior,
They've tried till they find they must stop:
Of the earth, 'tis the side most inferior,
Ould Ireland's acknowledged the top!

Here gold, in the place of pitaytees,
Ye dig, or pull up by the roots;
Here a gentleman's bus'niss to wait is
At table, or polish your boots.
Though we cut off the floor in straw-stockings,
And find it dry work, ankle-deep
In cold water, 'mid loud cradle rockings,
Defying a babby to sleep.

Malt whisky, they make out of peaches;
They've animals called kangaroos,
With pockets—though never a breeches
The natives, in general, use!
(Which reminds me a durny black negur
I kilt—though he isn't quite dead—
The naked spalpeen was so eager
That on his coat-tail I should tread).

The cherry-stones, here, against nature,
Outside of the cherries are stuck;
Last Thursday I shot a dumb creature,
That's either a dog or a duck.
It appears there's conflicting opinions
Which species belong to be mut;
So, to square it, we stuffed him with inions,
And baked him in puppy-pie crust.

Excuse this disjointed epistle,
I've sprained my left hand and can't spell!
Not a singing-bird here that can whistle!
No rose that has learnt how to smell!
The house-sparrows all are red parrots,
Who chatter in outlandish brogues:
Wealth, liveried-servants, and chariots,
Are punishments, here, for the rogues!

I send you a trilling remittance:
Supposing it's thieved on the way,
I beg that the whole of the pittance
To punish the villain you'll pay.
And inform me if all has gone pleasant
(The dodge of a false name I've tried,
Which I'd rather not mention at present,
So please to direct it inside).

I might have sent more; but a stranger
Who coupled his fortunes with mine,
(Whom, hearing he'd been a "Bushranger,"
I judged in the gardening line,
And therefore a good hand at digging),
Thought fit with my gold to decamp—
When he's hanged, as I hope, for the priggish,
I'll seek my revenge on the scamp.

My love to the pig and to Biddy,
(The former, I hope, cut up fair),
To her husband—suppose she's a widdy—
Explain that no malice I bear.
What with crossing sea, channel, and isthmus,
I've lost count of time and of space,
But, at least, I can say, "Merry Christmas!"
Direct from my heart—the right place.

ROBERT B. BROUGH.

THE "BETTER CLASSES" IN AUSTRALIA.—A settler at Melbourne, writing to the "Times," says:—"It may seem strange to you to send a dozen lines 16,000 miles, not to convey a particle of intelligence about goldfields, or politics, or commerce, or any other topic of general interest, but simply to say to gentle emigrants, 'Be on your guard!' nevertheless, this is the sole object of my letter. We are inundated here with 'respectable people,' who come out to starve. Within the last fortnight I have been favoured by English friends with letters to introduce three different families. The first was a gentleman farmer, wife and child, whose object is to farm on a grand scale, with a capital of £500! Of this he will probably spend at a boarding-house £100 before he hears of anything to suit him. With the residue he may possibly purchase a fourth share in a broken-down station, that may support him for six months, and then gaze him for relief from his partners' debts. The second was a professional man with a wife and half-a-dozen children; he arrived with a trifle more than £100 in his pocket; at the end of ten days it was reduced to £10, and he has, very wisely, condescended to a clerkship of £150 per annum, which will merely suffice to keep him from actual mendicancy. The third was a widow and four young children, whom she hopes to educate by opening a school for young ladies. She landed with something short of £100, the proceeds, she tells me, of her furniture after paying her passage money. She has been here ten days, and has £30 left. The best advice I could give her—lady as she certainly is—is to advertise for a housemaid's situation, and, if she can obtain one, to apply her wages to the board and lodging of her four little ones. She has not the shadow of a chance of anything better. Her piteous 'If I could but get back again!' was enough to break one's heart. It is not merely absurd, it is absolutely wicked, to delude people of 'the better class,' as it is called, to come out in the hope of improving their position."

AFFAIRS OF THE EAST INDIA COMPANY.

A GENERAL Court of the East India Company was held in one of the committee-rooms of the India House on Monday, to receive a report of the committee of proprietors appointed "for the purpose of consulting with the directors in reference to the measures to be taken for the future management of the company's affairs." Colonel Sykes, M.P., the newly-elected chairman, presided.

Mr. Crawshaw, the chairman of the committee, read the report, which contains a correspondence with Lord Stanley in reference to the subject. In the last letter from his Lordship, it was stated that he was unable to decide upon the amount to be paid annually to the East India Company, consequent on the duties and responsibility devolving on them, until he was aware of the arrangements which the East India Company propose to make for the execution of the duties referred to. He therefore requested to be informed whether it was the wish of the proprietors of the East India stock that the entire control and distribution of the fund set apart for the payment of their dividends should be committed to the directors, or whether the arrangements under which these dividends have hitherto been issued from the house should be continued.

The committee, thereupon came to the following resolution:—"With reference to the offer of the Secretary of State for India in council this committee is prepared to recommend to the court of proprietors the acceptance of the arrangement proposed, upon the following conditions:—That, in accordance with sec. 2, 3 and 4, William IV., cap. 85, there shall be paid to the company to their own use—that is to say, to the account of the East India Company with the Bank of England, the yearly dividend, after the rate of £10 10s. per cent. per annum on the present amount of their capital stock, and that such dividend be so paid by equal half-yearly payments, on or before the 6th day of January and the 6th day of July, in every year; and further that, together with the first half-yearly dividend so paid, the amount of all unclaimed dividends up to that day be paid to the above-mentioned account with the Bank of England. That all dividend warrants be signed by two directors, and the secretary of the East India Company. That accommodation be provided in the East India House for the directors and proprietors, viz.: That the proprietors' room remain devoted to its former use; that at least one room be assigned to the directors for their regular use; that a room be provided for the secretary of the company; that the general courts of the company be held in the India House. That with reference to the sections 69 and 72 of the late act 21 and 22 Victoria, cap. 106, by the former of which the number of the directors of the East India Company is for the present to be maintained at twelve, and finally to be reduced to six—provision be made by the Secretary of State for the payment of salaries to such directors, and of a salary to the secretary of the company, and also for defraying other expenses incidental to the legal management of the company's affairs, not otherwise provided for by this arrangement. That the Secretary of State and the company be at liberty to terminate this arrangement on giving six months' notice. That the above resolutions be sent by the chairman to the officiating secretary of the court of directors, with a request that they may be forwarded to the Secretary of State."

After the report was prepared another letter was received from the Secretary of State, stating that on the dividend warrants being duly signed, it was the intention of Lord Stanley to transfer to the credit of the company, £315,000, the aggregate amount of the dividends, it being understood that the amount of any unclaimed dividends would be re-transferred to the Secretary of State at the expiration of twelve months after they became due. The report concluded with a recommendation that the court of directors should be invested with powers to carry out the resolutions of the committee, and that the bye-laws should be amended to meet the altered circumstances of the company.

This report was received, the committee were thanked, and a resolution was moved claiming, on the part of the company, the current and unclaimed dividends. Against this was put an amendment that the responsibility of unclaimed dividends should be given to the Government, and that the future business, as Lord Stanley had suggested, should be transacted in the India House establishment. The motion was carried; and it was further carried that counsel be consulted on the subject, and that Lord Stanley's offer of the use of the India House for the Company be accepted.

THE FRENCH WAR DEPARTMENT. A report from this department shows the exact amount of the military stores on the 31st of December, 1856, both as to quantity and value. According to this statement, they represent a value of 631,000,000c.—an enormous amount, in which the artillery stands for one-half. This valuation of more than half a million, which does not include the buildings, shows the vast resources which France is provided with against all contingencies. The figure of 631,000,000 is, however, over 6,000,000 less than what appeared in the account of the preceding year. The diminution is explained by the fortunate conclusion of peace, which allowed the Government to reduce the extraordinary supplies required during the war.—"Monteur de l'Armée."

THE NEW ZEALAND GOLDFIELDS.—Recent accounts from New Zealand report that the colony is prosperous. The gold-fields there are steadily increasing in value. They have now been discovered about eight months, and £100,000 worth of gold in dust and nuggets have already been obtained from them. They are situated close to Massacre Bay, where a boat's crew of the famous circumnavigator, Tasman, were massacred by the natives. This bay is fifty miles from Nelson, and in August last, 1,000 persons were at work at the diggings. The gold is of good quality.

A CASTAWAY.—In April last a Belgian vessel, called the *Leopold*, was wrecked on a rock near one of the Falkland Islands, on the coast of Patagonia. It was supposed that all her crew had perished; but letters have been received from a sailor named Decker, announcing that he alone escaped. He swam from the wreck, with the captain and some of the men, towards an island which they saw near, but he alone reached it. He found the island uninhabited, and had to live on some bread which had been washed ashore, wild celery, and some birds, which he killed with a stick. He happened to have matches about him, and succeeded in lighting a fire, which he fed with turf. To make his fire burn well, he partly surrounded it with some planks washed ashore from the wreck. In the night of the 5th the wind blew these planks into the fire, and they were consumed. He thought this a terrible disaster, but it was the means of saving him. An American ship happened to be passing two miles off, and seeing the rising smoke—an extraordinary thing on a desert island—sent off a boat's crew. They found the poor fellow crouching over his fire, and took him on board.

COLLAPSE OF THE MIND.—An overworked brain is not an unknown phenomenon in England; witness Scott, Southey, Moore, Canning, and Castlereagh. A leading writer in the "Journal des Débats" and "Revue des Deux Mondes," was a few nights ago at his desk, absorbed in composition, when of a sudden memory vanished, facts, men, and things all faded out of view, and a complete blank as to the past was substituted for a mind teeming with information, logic, and eloquence. M. Rigault is become a mere child again, and will have to re-commence his school days, unless some recuperative or re-actionary spirit set in.

THE DEBAUCHER HUGHES.—David Hughes, the London solicitor, who lately absconded to Australia in the "Red Jacket," was captured off Melbourne, by an English detective, who had gone overland. Hughes had only about £500 in his possession, although his debts approach £200,000. He was permitted to go at large, with a tifle in his pocket and his boxes of wearing apparel. The remainder of the spoil was surrendered.

THE IONIANS.—"Piracy," says a correspondent of the "Times," "is by no means extinct in the Egean and Ionian Seas; and the inhabitants of the Mores, though no match for steamers and large sailing-vessels, still exchange the reciprocal courtesies of cattle-lifting with the neighbouring islands. It is not many months since an English yacht fell a prey to these marauders; and no small craft puts to sea in those waters without a wholesome provision of fire-arms. Her Majesty's ship *Ariel* has just been sent down to cruise among the islands for the prevention of these depredations. The islanders are also good wreckers, and watch a ship in a storm with feelings of great interest. Lighthouses are an abomination in their sight. A gentleman who has just returned from a shooting excursion encountered a severe gale off Ithaca, and, though the natives gathered in numbers on the shore in expectation of his yacht being driven on the rocks and wrecked, his shouts brought no help, and on a cessation of the storm he and his friends were received with expressions of lively disappointment. An adventurous citizen was upset in his boat off Cephalonia, the other day, and drifted for a good while clinging to it; a large raft of Greeks put off from the shore, as he thought, to rescue him, but on their approach to within twenty yards of him they stopped rowing, and inquired what price he would pay for the rescue. The young officer, not being inclined to bargain for his life, and seeing a good chance of drifting to land, would not come to terms, so they left him to his fate, which was not, however, I am happy to say, a watery grave. These are pleasant little characteristics of the amiable race who inhabit these pretty islands, and spurn the British protectorate. No doubt a Russian system would better suit their deserts, as they cannot be expected to appreciate liberty of the subject and the benefits of a constitutional form of government."

IRELAND.

EFFECTIVE PREACHING.—One of the Redemptorist Fathers was preaching to a crowded congregation, at the Kilkenny Romish Cathedral, on the doctrine of the real presence. The preacher enforced the views of the Church of Rome on that subject with great energy and eloquence, exciting to a high pitch the feelings of his hearers; so that when suddenly, at his invitation, the tabernacle was unveiled, all looked at it with one accord, and a murmur arose that the Saviour was about to appear to their eyes in the shape in which he had been before seen on earth. Those who were seated in the position in the building as not to be able properly to see the tabernacle rushed forward and urged on those before them, causing such a deafening pressure as to break down and force forward some seats and benches, to crush the occupants. Many persons were severely hurt.

BEARDS THE LION IN HIS DEN.—Some excitement was created in London on the 13th, by the entry of a formidable posse of fifty men—all of the comfortable peasant class, and each man carrying a stout shillibill. They took a deputation from the parish of Mayo, delegated to wait upon his Grace John of Palm, for the purpose, not alone of protesting against the appointment of a certain clergyman lately collated to that parish, but of not only upon having the man of their choice. They have set the ornaments of the Lion so completely at defiance, that they have kept the chapel doors open for the last ten weeks against his new nominee, who is obliged to read in an old page hard by. On the arrival of the deputation in town, he proceeded en masse to the archiepiscopal mansion of St. J. O'Brien's, where "Grace" gave audience, and after hearing their case, he condescended to make some sort of "put off" which did not seem to satisfy the deputation.

THE PHOENIX CLUB.—The excitement created by the arrests of members of the Phoenix Club is passing off. Rumours of special commissions into the matter, which at first gained ground, are fast fading away, and, in the absence of fresh captures, the affair is becoming rather small. The examination of the prisoners has been strictly private.

SCOTLAND.

MR. BRIGHT AND THE SCOTCH REFORMERS.—Mr. Bright has attended a conference at Edinburgh, composed of deputies from various Scotch bodies. It was agreed at the conference that Scotland should be included in the new Reform Bill, and should not have a Reform Bill for itself. On Monday Mr. Bright attended a public meeting in the City Hall, Glasgow, at which a speech was a repetition and enforcement of the views he had expressed at Birmingham. As to the inequalities of representation, he remarked that Edinburgh and Glasgow, with a taxable property of £7,000,000, had only four members, while one hundred and one boroughs in England and Wales had 126 members, although the value of the taxable property in the Scotch boroughs was less than the above sum, that is to say, £7,134,000. Mr. Bright denied that he had in any way moderated his principles, and declared himself anxious to see lodgers admitted to the franchise, who are admitted in some cities of Scotland, namely, by proving that they pay a rent of £10. By getting Parliamentary Reform, Mr. Bright said he contemplated such changes as were necessary in the laws of primogeniture and entail, and in checking the growth of national expenditure. The speaker also referred to an irresponsible foreign policy that had produced sufferings only recorded upon the tablet of the Divine mind.

THE PROVINCES.

DARING BURGLARY.—At midnight, on Sunday, the dwelling-house of Mr. Gratton, a cooper and farmer, residing at Bodelnall, about three miles from Chesterfield, was entered by thieves. The burgars lighted candles, put on masks, and in this disguise proceeded upstairs. The old people were awakened, and Mr. Gratton, seeing the light, rushed out of bed, and attempted to prevent the thieves entering the room, but the first of the party knocked him down with a ink-pot. Another of the party seized Mrs. Gratton, whilst the others proceeded to ransack the house, taking with them about £30 and a single-barrelled gun.

THE REFORM ASSOCIATION AT MANCHESTER.—The section of Manchester Liberals who support Mr. Bright have carried out their intention of forming a reform association. At a meeting in the Free-Trade Hall last week, resolutions were adopted as a basis of the "Lancashire Reformers' League." Among these resolutions is one for "an equal distribution of members of Parliament in reference to population and property." Reform meetings continue to be held in various parts of the country—at Bridgwater, Southampton, Paisley, and elsewhere.

MYSTERIOUS DISAPPEARANCE OF A SCHOOLMISTRESS.—Miss Audley, Manchester schoolmistress, has now been missing for some time in a very suspicious circumstance. On Saturday week she left home, saying she was going to Newton by the eleven o'clock train to see an acquaintance, an old widow lady, and that she would be back in the evening. On Monday, as she had not returned, a messenger was sent to Newton, but she was not there. Her friends reside in Wales, and they were informed of her disappearance. They, too, had heard nothing of her. Her appointments were then broken into, and her watch and wearing apparel were found. Miss Audley had invested her savings in the bank, during the last three years, and they have not been withdrawn. All these circumstances create much mystery.

AWKWARD PREJUDICEMENT.—Two men, Seddon and another, were proposed to descend in a bucket from the top of a newly-erected chimney, forty-five yards high, at Tinsington, when Seddon's companion slipped out of it, and something he had forgotten, and the rope becoming detached from the top of the apparatus, the bucket containing Seddon was precipitated down inside of the chimney. The descent was checked at various stages, and Seddon was picked up not very seriously hurt. The young man at the top of the chimney being thus left without any communication, was anxious to discover some means by which he might be rescued, as the prospect of remaining in the dark, at the top of a tall chimney, on a cold winter's night, was anything but cheering. After some consultation he took off one of his stockings, and proceeded to unravel it, after which he tied a snare of brick to one end and let it down to the bottom. To this a piece of rope was attached, and was then drawn to the top. Afterwards a rope was attached to the string, and the young man then began to pull the rope, but, unfortunately, when he had drawn it nearly half-way up, it was found too heavy for him; and, after holding it a short time, he was obliged to relinquish his grasp, and he was once more without any communication with the persons at the bottom. He then took off his other stocking, and proceeded as before, and by slow degrees succeeded in getting the end of the rope to the top of the chimney. The apparatus being put once more in working condition, he attached the rope to his body, and was snatched safely deposited on terra firma, after having occupied his perilous position for nearly four hours.

A THREE FINGERED.—A man boarded a schooner, at Gloucester, with rum, and in endeavouring to steal some of the spirit he got entangled with the liquor. He had a candle in his hand, the flames from which ignited his clothes; he rushed frantically on deck, and endeavoured to escape to his own vessel, when, lying on the ground, setting fire to her mainmast, he died next day.

MURDER IN NOTTINGHAMSHIRE.—A murder was perpetrated last week at Bulwell, in Nottinghamshire. A publican, named Woodhead, was shot to death in an upper apartment of his house, caused by a thief, who was proceeding to ascertain the cause, when some ruffian rushed in with a pistol, and with an iron bar, and then decamped. Mr. Woodhead died next morning. The police have a man in custody on suspicion.

MURDER WILL OUT.—About twenty years ago, a lad who rendered personal assistance to a Dr. Greenhow mysteriously disappeared. The mother believed to the last that her son had gone to sea, and would one day return. Dr. Greenhow and the poor old woman died, and every body long ceased to trouble themselves about the fate of the missing youth. But the discovery of some letters, beneath the house to which the lad had fled, contained the last errand, has awakened a suspicion that the poor fellow was murdered.

AN EVICTION AND ITS CONSEQUENCES.—Two brothers, named George and Thomas Parry, labouring men, were found lying dead on a heap of waste ashes, near some iron works, at Bradford. From the evidence given at the inquest by the widow of Thomas Parry, their death seemed to have been the result of misfortune and privation. About twelve months ago, the brother Thomas came from Leeds to Manchester, obtained employment, and was followed three weeks since by his wife and children. She found her husband living with his brother (a widower) in a small house in Green Lane, Miller's Lane. On Monday week a rent-collector applied for the late week's rent that was in arrear, both brothers having been out of work for some time. It was not paid. The agent went away, but shortly returned with a bailiff, and swept away all the furniture; even the tea, of which the poor woman was partaking at the time, was seized and thrown into the street. The agent next took the woman by the shoulders, put her and the children into the street, and locked the door. The unfortunate mother, who, after finding no better resting-place for a time than a door-step, when evening arrived, they were joined by the two men, who, about half-past ten o'clock, obtained shelter for them in a lodging-house. The two men went away to brave the inclemency of the night in any place that might be most inviting. Thomas knew the engineer of the iron works at Bradford, and thought they might have shelter in the engine-house there. He was disappointed. Not being able to get into the engine-house, the men went to a large heap of smoking ashes, and, lying down on the warmest spot, went to sleep, never more to wake. The noxious fumes rising from their ill-chosen bed must have speedily suffocated them. A verdict of "Accidental death," was returned.

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ILLUSTRATED TIMES.

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 24, 1858.

THE CLOSE OF THE YEAR.

EIGHTEEN HUNDRED AND FIFTY-EIGHT is going out quietly enough, in every way—perhaps with less Christmas poetry, whether of weather or public temper, than most years. There is a neutral tint about things generally—about the moral and the physical atmosphere both. Nothing striking is happening; nothing formidable is expected; on the whole, the prospects of the country are good; and yet, somehow, it is but in mediocre good spirits that we all seem to enter on the festivities of the season.

The explanation of this frame of mind is probably that the country experiences some re-action, after events like the Russian war and the Indian mutiny, the excitement of which—a mixture of joy and sorrow—gave an impulse to everything else. We are now in the dregs of both—having drunk the cup of mingled triumph, terror, and pride, down; and the uncertainty of the future is more felt. The political uneasiness of the Continent is sympathetically shared here, and the general sense of some impending movements at home, the nature of which, as yet, is obscure, does not diminish the feeling. But, as this is, again, counteracted by a confidence derived from the way in which some recent national difficulties have been met, the result is a sober and dubious kind of contentment—half-way between gloom and gaiety, like the weather itself.

The Indian news is exactly of this character. Lord Clyde's campaign has begun well. The proclamation is producing its effects. No new dangers arise, and the last of the old ones are disappearing before the armies with which we are everywhere extinguishing insurrection. Yet the work is necessarily slow; the people submit to, but don't sympathise with us; and nobody ventures to fix a time when we shall be able to recall any of the troops, whose presence may at a very short notice be desirable at home. It is not that anybody desponds as to the result, or distrusts the new Indian Government. But, naturally, a prolonged difficulty at that great distance keeps up what we may call a subdued uneasiness in the public mind.

It is much the same thing with our domestic affairs. There has been a most remarkable absence of agitation in the country for the last few years. Chartism is nearly as much forgotten as Jack Cade. The worst periods of the Crimean failures passed over in unexampled quiet. Even now, when a very active organisation is on foot for the express purpose of bringing public excitement to bear on the Reform question, the country takes it up very coolly. And yet, in spite of all this, the uncertainty as to what the new year may bring forth in the way of political movement, is not without a chastening effect (so to speak) on the spirit of the country. If there were not some apprehension on the subject, we should not have pamphlets like those of Mr. Drummond's, speeches like those of Mr. Lowe's, or articles like those in which the "Times" has recently thrown the coldest of cold water on all Reform projects. This curious blending of scepticism about the future, without pretence to perfect satisfaction with the present state of the country, is very characteristic of existing opinion. It is not apathy exactly, it is too restless to be called that; it is something vague and undefined of which one can only say with certainty that it shows a want of real knowledge of the principles on which things should be carried on. But the prevailing effect of it is to produce that undecided state of feeling which we remarked, in setting out, to be the present phase of popular opinion—a phase, indeed, free from the alarms of turbulent times, and yet wanting the conserved lightness of spirit of happy ones. Such, we say, if we have successfully read the signs, is the look of the sky during this sun-set of the Old Year: a gray, dingy, half-uncomfortable kind of sky, which may end in a finer morning than usual, but does not promise it.

On looking back at the year which is leaving us, we must give it credit for a fair share of political importance. It has done something in every department—shaken the ascendancy of the Whigs in Parliament, and made practicable several compromises—the Jewish Disabilities one, for instance. It has seen us assume a more honourable attitude towards France, and that while France has been completing Cherbourg. It has added India to Her Majesty's dominions; and opened Japan for the first time, and China much more extensively, to the

enterprise of Europe. In the world of practical science, it has witnessed the receipt of a telegraphic message across the Atlantic—a fact which will bear its fruit by and by. Commerce has been reviving during its course, and if the aspect of foreign affairs has been often menacing, at least the dangers keep off. The old year will be respectfully remembered in the annals of this time; and many people would probably exchange the possible glories of the coming 1859 for the certainty of an equally useful and tranquil twelvemonth.

SAYINGS AND DOINGS

HER MAJESTY AND THE ROYAL FAMILY arrived at Windsor on Monday, from Osborne.

THE PRINCE OF WALES has returned home from his visit to Berlin, and has brought with him the original of the Black Eagle, conferred on him by the Prince Regent of Prussia.

PRINCE ALBERT has been appointed a patron of the Royal Naval School, and has given a donation of £50 to it.

THE REMAINS OF A MASTODON were recently found, near Clarksville, Ohio, in the bed of a pond that had recently been drained off. The bones of the leg below the knee measure 4½ feet in length, and one of them weighs 56 lbs.; one of the bones above the knee is 19 feet long, and weighs about 100 lbs.; the ribs range from 12 to 16 feet in length; and a tooth from the lower jaw weighs 14 lbs.

IN A SHOP WINDOW at Paris was exhibited an engraved portrait of Mr. Charles Dickens, with a beard and a turban, sitting at a desk in a theatrical position, and writing. The police entered the shop, and told the proprietor, in very angry terms, to take the engraving out of the window. They mistook Mr. Dickens's portrait for a caricature of the Emperor!

A VERDICT OF MANSLAUGHTER has been returned against a road surveyor, at Neyland, for having allowed a heap of stones to be placed in the centre of the road, by which the gig of Mr. Hawkins, a commercial traveller, was upset, and fatal injuries inflicted on him.

MR. PATRICK KERNAN, of Rathfriland, county of Tipperary, who recently died, in his 80th year, in London, has left £10,000 to English charities.

THE CHURCH OF THE CATHEDRAL OF WIKRY (Saxony) has instituted proceedings against a man, named Rehnitz, for apostasy, for having turned from Lutheran doctrines and propagated Anabaptist views.

HER MAJESTY AND THE PRINCE CONSORT, it is said, have each addressed a separate letter to the Bishop of London, expressing their high satisfaction with the important charge recently delivered to his clergy.

MR. HENRY DASHWOOD, of the Atlas, the oldest assurance secretary in London, has resigned on a handsome pension after more than fifty years' service. He is succeeded by Mr. Richard Ray, formerly of the Sun Fire Office.

THE ROYAL COMMISSIONERS OF 1851 are about to plant the three great trees, viz., Exhibition Road, Cornwall Road, and Prince Albert's Road, with lime trees.

THREE HUNDRED AND SIXTY-EIGHT PURE ALPACAS have been safely shipped from Valparaiso for distribution in Melbourne and Sydney.

THE HON. MR. TALBOT has been appointed Sergeant-at-Arms to the House of Lords, in the place of Colonel Peel, deceased.

THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES has sent Mr. John Gill, master mariner of Plymouth, a handsome medal, in remembrance of his praiseworthy conduct in April, 1851, in rescuing, during a storm in the Atlantic, 74 passengers—men, women, and children—from the distressed ship Black Hawk, of New York.

ON THE 9TH OF DECEMBER a heavy clap of thunder was heard in the village of Chate, near Toulouse, and a multitude of birds were noticed. Immediately afterwards, an enormous storm, black and lowering hot, fell on breaking it, they found that it was perfectly extinct.

THE GOVERNOR OF A MILITARY PRISON OF THE FIRST CLASS is, in future, to have relative rank as a major, and the governors of military prisons of the second and third classes as captains; this decision does not confer any right to command troops.

MR. SPENCER says of Gothic churches, that he could never make him of heard in them, and could easily see that the devil invented the style.

MR. BALGUY, Commissioner in Bankruptcy for the Birmingham district, died last week. He will be succeeded by Mr. George Saunders, of Chancery Lane, London.

MR. SCOTT, the architect to whom Government confided the building of the new Foreign Office, is a grandson of the Rev. Thomas Scott, the celebrated commentator.

MR. GRAVES, of Pall Mall, the print publisher, is about to erect a monument over the grave of Sir Robert Strange, the great engraver, in the church of St. Paul, Covent Garden.

THE FRENCH NEWSPAPER STAFF RETURNS indicate that "Le Siècle" has the leading circulation of the daily press—viz., 36,000 copies—being double that of "La Presse," and one-third more than that of "Le Constitutionnel."

THE CHAIR OF NATURAL HISTORY IN THE UNIVERSITY OF ST. ANDREW'S is about to fall vacant. Candidates for the post must apply before the 3th of January.

THE CRYSTAL PALACE COMPANY have declared a dividend of 2s. 6d. a share, payable on the 3th of January.

THE BODY OF FRANCIS ARMSTRONG, a farm-servant at Kirkbride, was found dead on the roadside, with a gunshot wound on it; he had disagreed with his wife, and, it is supposed, shot himself.

A GAMEKEEPER, in Belgium, had found four young wolf cubs, which had always appeared to live together on the best terms, and he was surprised, a few mornings since, to find only one of them alive, and which one was busily engaged in devouring the bodies of the three others. The night before they had all received an abundant meal.

THE COUNTESS OF WILTON died last week, at Melton Mowbray. She was the only surviving child of Edward, twelfth Earl of Derby, and his second Countess, Miss Farren. She was born in 1801, two years after her half-nephew, the present Premier. The poor will feel her loss.

COUNT MONTALEMBERT'S CELEBRATED PAMPHLET has lately been sold at Paris with the title printed reversed, "Elihu Rux Tabed, par Ed Trebelmatom." Masses of the pamphlet were disposed of before the police were aware of the trick.

PEGGY FIELDKING, the wife of a Westmoreland farmer, was driving a cow, when the animal turned upon her, and gored her to death.

THE NEW SOCIETY FOR THE ENCOURAGEMENT OF THE FINE ARTS was established at a meeting held on Monday evening. Lord Carlisle is the patron of the Society; the Vice-Presidents are the Earl of Ellesmere, Viscount Ranelagh, Lord Feversham, Lord Ward, and the Rev. Sir Frederick Ousley.

THE SPECIAL SERVICES AT ST. PAUL'S continue to attract crowded congregations. Notwithstanding the severity of the weather on Sunday last, every available place was occupied.

THE BISHOP OF LONDON presided, on Monday, at a meeting held in Islington, to promote the increase of church accommodation in the parish. It was proposed that temporary iron churches should be erected.

A TRANSLATION OF UNCLE TOM'S CABIN has been published in Rome, but the Protestant sentiments in the work have been changed into Roman ones. Thus, the reason assigned for the cruel whipping of Tom by Legree is, that Tom believed in the doctrine of the Immaculate Conception.

THE POPE proposes to send a cardinal to America, it is said.

THE INTRODUCTION OF A RUSSIAN LOAN OF THE LONDON STOCK EXCHANGE is contemplated in the course of the coming year. The impression is that it will be for a considerable amount—probably £5,000,000. The expectation of an Austrian loan also gains strength, and in that case, too, the total is likely to be large.

A CORSIKAN CANON OF THE CATHEDRAL OF AJACCIO, NAMED PERETTI, has lately devoted his ecclesiastical leisure to the composition of a loyal poem, in twenty-four parts, entitled "Bonaparte, ou la France sauvée."

THE COUNT DE PARIS arrived at Seville on the 17th, on a visit to the Duke de Montpensier.

THE WAR DEPARTMENT propose to establish schoolrooms in the home barracks, exclusively for officers' children, who will be instructed by a schoolmaster of the first-class, with separate instruction in the continental languages, the parents paying merely a nominal sum to cover incidental expenses.

THE TURKISH GOVERNMENT has formed a commission at Constantinople to draw up a new Ottoman Dictionary.

THE EXTRAORDINARY FEAT of playing eight games of chess at the same time, without seeing the board in any one instance, was accomplished at the Paris chess-club on Saturday night by M. Harrwitz, without any apparent difficulty. He won six games out of the eight, and one of the others was drawn.

THE LOUNGER AT THE CLUBS.

ON Friday last a provisional meeting was held at the Hanover Square Rooms, for the purpose of instituting a "Society for the Encouragement of Fine Arts." The meeting was well attended, and the requisite preliminary resolutions were duly passed. The object of the society is good; it has several good names among the members of the council; but why, in the name of all that is absurd, did they issue such a preposterous "prospectus?" In the first paragraph we find that "The principles of beauty and order, constituting the harmony of nature, as manifested in form, colour, and musical and poetic utterance, are becoming generally recognised; and thus, whilst a new source of enjoyment is opened up to man, a new element of enlightenment and refinement is introduced into his being." And again:—

"It would, however, be a mistake to suppose that these grand results should be fully wrought out by accident, or spontaneously through the influence of art acting upon society wholly unprepared for its operation. On the contrary, a great educational question is involved in this intellectual movement; the public, as well as the artist, must acquire the mysteries of the new language, as well as they are to appreciate ideas of beauty and grace, and more essential still, both must learn to recognise the higher purpose and calling of those arts which they cultivate in common. Without this, taste for art would be but an instinct, unenlightened and unimproved through ignorance after generation; and art, if it would minister to that taste, must condescend for ever to commonplace and trivial subjects, and an ignominious mode of treatment."

Surely this is arrant nonsense! Fancy Jones, retired sugar-broker, at Brixton, with an artist friend for whose sake he became a guinea subscriber to the new society, acquiring "the mysteries of the new language in which they are to appreciate ideas of Beauty and Grace!"

"Punch's Almanack" is out, and, so far as the cuts are concerned, is exceedingly good. Mr. Tenniel is graceful and artistic, and Mr. Leach, who has at last got beyond his standard model of female prettiness, gives us some fifty pretty girls of every variety of beauty. The pictures of the snob at the opera, the little man in the beard, and the two street-boy notions, are also excellent. The hunting subject is dull enough, but it is, I suppose, necessary to please every class of buyers. To persistent readers of the periodical, it will be enough for me to say that the letterpress in the new Almanack is quite up to the hebdomadal average of hilarity. The following I take to be the very best joke, at least for that gentleman who may have succeeded in obtaining payment for it. "The antiquity of coachmen may be argued from the fact that the first thing in creation is believed to have been a CHA-OS; which, in the spelling of the period, is written otherwise, a 'Shay-oss.'"

THE THEATRICAL LOUNGER.

PRINCESS'S—STRAND—GOSNIP.

MR. CHARLES KEAN having made a great hit as Benedict, follows it up with playing Mr. Oakley, in the "Jealous Wife." Mr. Macready did exactly the same thing. "Nothing could be finer than Mr. Kean's new impersonation, so finished is it in conception and execution, so accurate in detail, and possessed throughout of such a thorough perception and appreciation of the ludicrous, that I begin firmly to believe that comedy is Charles Kean's forte. He has a hundred opportunities for gazing, the audience are with him throughout; he can play up to them in any way he chooses, and is certain of his laughs, but most wisely he ignores this fact, and wins their approbation solely by the most legitimate means. He is the *beau idéal* of henpecked good-nature. His wife is exacting, is suspicious, is a tyrant, but—he loves her! she must not be hurt. His brother the major's counsels are of the roughest, he will try remonstrance, submission, anything! It is not till the last that he asserts his true position, but when once asserted, nothing shall move him from it. He is so perfectly gentlemanly too, withal; he is a man in society, respecting its laws, and observing its ordinances, and, so far as his peculiar position will allow, everything shall be done in consonance therewith. It was an admirable piece of acting, and fully deserved the applause with which it was received. Mrs. Kean, too, was a very excellent, perhaps a thought too shrewish, but earnest and spirited to a degree. Miss Heath played charmingly, with a natural modesty and ladylike quietude, which, above all other actresses now on the stage, she appears to me to possess. Mr. Cooper, too, deserves the greatest credit for the easy, gentlemanly firmness with which he played Major Oakley. But no! Mr. Frank Matthews, no! You have too often burlesqued the stage father, in his curled wig, his broad-skirted coat, his three-cornered hat, and his thick stick, to attempt to palm off upon us this *rechauffé* of old conventionalism as a type of real character! No! Mr. Walter Lacy, no! You are far too good an actor, and far too well-educated a gentleman to believe that foppings like Lord Trinket perpetually assumed that stiff-knee'd gait, that use of the eye-glass, and that resort to the snuff-box! No! Mr. Saker! You have overshot your mark! Excellent second low comedian as you are, you have yet a great deal to learn before you aspire to "leading business;" and, when next you have to play a country squire of the past century, read, a little, Fielding and Smollet: there you will find that the character you have to represent was not a buffooning idiot, with straddled legs and a fixed grin, but a character worth studying!

What has happened to our dramatic authors? Last week, Mr. Bayle Bernard, clever original writer, knowing every requirement of the stage, produces an ineffective comedy; this week, Mr. Frank Talfourd, one of the smartest jokers of the day, equally well up in dramatic necessities, produces an ineffective farce! "The Rule of Three" it is called, and was played at the Strand Theatre on Monday night. Very slight plot, very commonplace dialogue, save where studded with elaborated puns, very badly acted (save by Miss F. Ternan), it was not likely to succeed, and it did not. Has too much success had a baneful influence on Mr. Frank Talfourd? I should hope not! He has shown himself the possessor of great natural humour and a ready wit, and, in these days, such qualifications must not be ignored, when, perhaps, a little carelessness has stood in the way of the success which he naturally expects.

Mr. Brough's burlesque, the "Siege of Troy," to be produced at the Lyceum on Christmas-eve, is a tremendous work. There are no less than forty speaking characters!

Mrs. Montague William's (Miss Louisa Keeley) appearance at the Lyceum is deferred. Her part in the burlesque will be taken by Miss Julia St. George.

Madame Celeste will not return to the Adelphi.

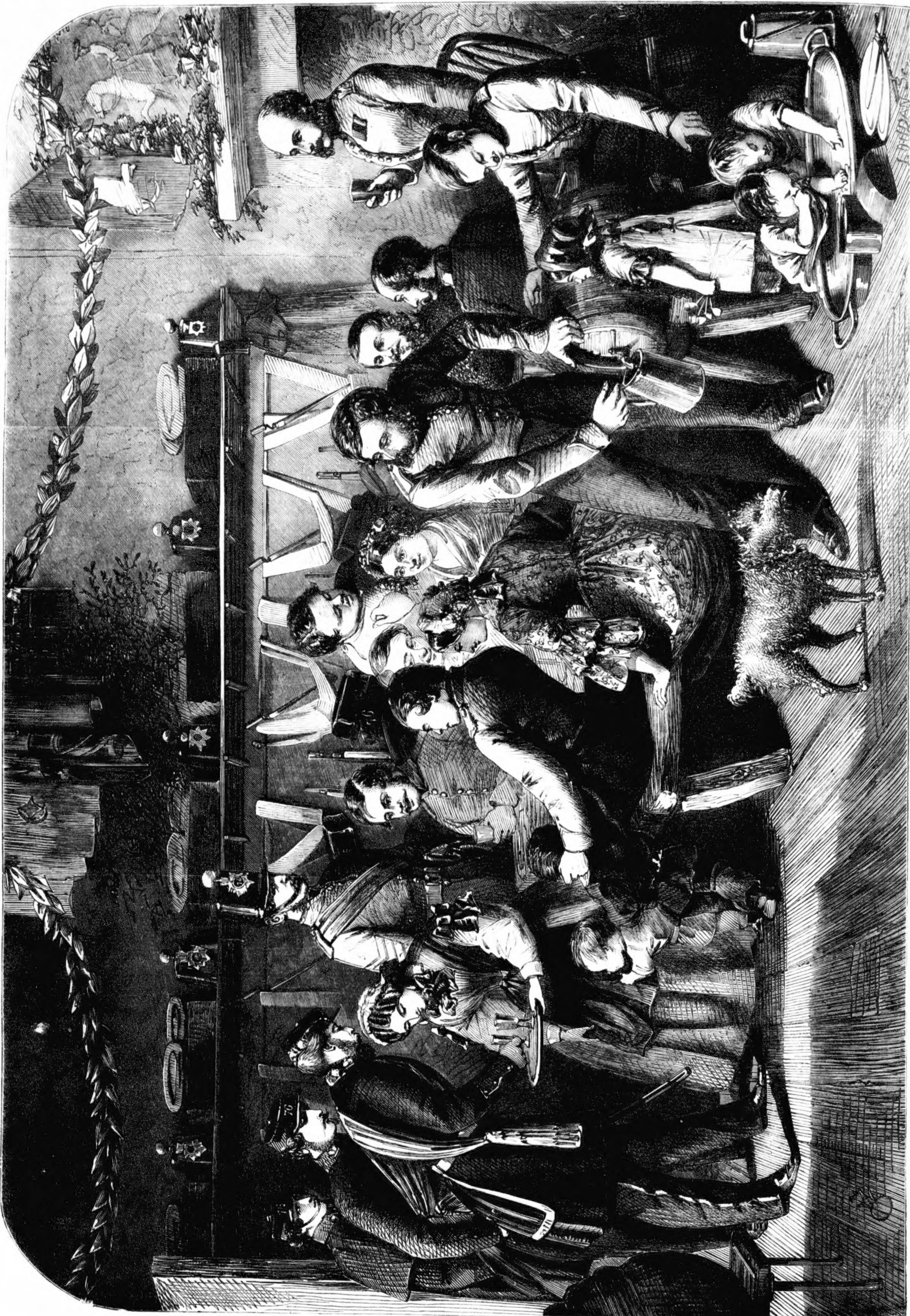
PUNISHMENT BY THE SHOWER-BATH.—The following occurrence in the Auburn State Prison is reported in the American papers:—A negro convict, named More, was overheard muttering threats against a foreman in his shop, and was seen sharpening a knife. The foreman entered a complaint against More, who was taken to the shower bath, pinioned, and deluged with three barrels of water, the punishment occupying half an hour. When the water was all used, the negro was taken from the bath, and carried to the hospital, where he died five minutes after his admittance. The news of his death led to a prison riot, suppressed with some difficulty. An inquest was held, and a verdict returned that the death of the deceased was undoubtedly hastened by the application of the shower bath, as administered at the hands of his keeper and the deputy warder.

A VERY VIOLENT THUNDER-STORM broke over Worcester and Birmingham on Saturday, to the alarm of the inhabitants, it would seem.

A FIRE broke out in St. Thomas's Church, Dudley, on Sunday, during the performance of Divine service. The congregation was quietly warned, and left the church in an orderly way. The fire raged for two hours, and did great damage to the building.

A YOUNG MAN, an apprentice, was invited to a party, where he was introduced to a young woman. A walk was proposed, and he offered this young lady his arm. She declined it, saying: "I shall not walk with the ugly beast!" The stupid fellow walked off to the Regent's Canal, and drowned himself.

POISONING A CHILD WITH GIN.—Two infamous women were charged, at the Thames Police-court, last week, with giving a large quantity of gin to a child two years and ten months old. Several witnesses deposed that one of the women was drunk on the previous evening, and that she and her daughter gave the child five or six glasses of gin. The infant was staggering, and at last fell down motionless. The woman said the baby could get drunk, and could drink a bottle of gin as well as she.



CHRISTMAS EVE IN BARRACKS.—DRAWN BY W. SHARP.—(SEE PAGE 421.)



"OF COURSE IT'S THE SEASON THAT'S TO BLAME!"—(DRAWN BY J. PARCER.)

"THE SEASON'S TO BLAME."

To blame for what? For the picturesque interior of a noble old English mansion? for a gallant, burly, richly-dressed cavalier of the old school, and his flourishing family—of whom we are certain could be repeated the old chivalric boast, that "all the sons are brave, and all the daughters virtuous"? To blame for the lusty young servant lads and lasses? Well, perhaps the season may be to blame for a little—well, no, not indecorum, you know—but freedom and romping, and that sort of thing. But in no unpardonable degree, we are sure.

You see that old Father Christmas has conspired with the mistletoe, and that, again, with some dimpled, pleasure-trembling female hands, which have affixed it to the antique roof-tree, a verdant chandelier, with myriads of seed-pearl drops. Then, again, cheerful temperaments, and the remembrance of a happy season when we have millions of reasons to be thankful and pleased, yea, and to lift up our hearts in joy and gladness, have conspired with youth and prettiness, blooming cheeks and sparkling eyes. If girls were all sent into the world Miss Billins, you know, there wouldn't be any kissing under the mistletoe; but so long as those mischief-making enchantresses have hands and feet, and slim waists and rosy cheeks—why, of course, it will so happen sometimes that it's the "season" only you must blame.

We don't profess to be very nice judges of costume; but, carefully considering this picture, we think the time fixed upon by the artist must be the interregnum that occurred between the abdication of spooner Richard Cromwell and the Stuart restoration. Grim Oliver lies stiff and stark in his grand tomb at Westminster—so they say—though many secretly whisper that his body has been conveyed away and buried in an occult place, for fear of accidents.* At all events he is dead, and Major-General Parliamentary Anarchy reigns in his stead, but King Charles II. of that name has not yet come to his own again. The cavalier's attire is rich enough, his eldest son is a gallant fellow in sufficient bravery of costume, but they lack as yet the inordinate periwigs and extravagance of lace, tags, ribbons, puffs, and slashings, which are to be brought over very soon with other foreign fashions—not quite so harmless, all of them—by the Royal prodigal. The daughter of the house, too, though daintily bedizened, offers more evidence of the decorous Henrietta Maria style of costume, than of the low-necked splendour of King Charles's brazen beauties. This, *hien entendu*, may be partially accounted for by the fact (that it is a fact we are perfectly convinced) that Sir Francis—his name is Sir Francis, he fought at Naseby fight, and his father was of the expedition to the Isle of Rhé—married Mistress Alicia Peabody, of the Puritanical persuasion. There she is, somewhat pinched and starched, though she has deferred so far to her husband's Cavalier predilections as to wear one feather in her hat—thinking, it seems to us, that the romping servitors, male and female, are much more to blame than the season, and that stripes and low diet would be a fitting reward for this unseemly merrymaking. Mistress Alicia's father was that worthy and grace-walting Presbyterian Hashbaz Peabody, called "Fight-the-Fight." Pulpit drum ecclesiastic he beat with a fist instead of a stick most lustily during the civil wars. He was a Parliament man, and one of Oliver's Commissioners of Sequestration; and, in the latter capacity, was very useful to his graceless Cavalier son-in-law, whose broad acres he redeemed from utter confiscation by the comparatively easy purgation of heavy fines. Hashbaz Peabody, after all, had some bowels, and Mistress Alicia, though impressed with somewhat stringent notions respecting household discipline, is a kindly-hearted woman; but she will turn in a minute, and rebuke for untimely levity at "an unhand-some sight," that sniggering, spectacled, velvet skull-capped old grand-sire, Sir Walter. He is a baronet, and his son was knighted just before Naseby. The sly old soldier minds the time when he too has kissed and prattled with five times fifty fair maids.

We think it must be breakfast time. You know that good ale and wine used to be drunk at the morning meal two centuries ago; or, perhaps, they are clearing away the remnants of last night's supper. The servants are late—they always are at Christmas time—but then the season's to blame. That unlucky mistletoe was in the way; the knight and his family came suddenly on them, and surprised Lance with Bridget, Roger with Dorothy, and under that same unlucky blameable branch—

Nothing of the sort. The mistletoe isn't to blame at all. Youth's to blame! warm blood's to blame! dancing hearts are to blame! innocence of wrong-doing's to blame. And especially the season. We hope it may be as blameable once every twelve months, for years and years to come.

LORD BROUGHAM has been invited to a banquet at Edinburgh, by the Lord Provost, the Lord Advocate, the Dean of Faculty, the Provost of Leith, the Master of the Merchant Company, almost all the professors of the University, and, indeed, all the most eminent men in the city.

THE SHIPOWNERS' GRIEVANCES.—The shipowners of the North have succeeded in mustering a number of delegates at the central point of the London Tavern, in order to make a public statement of their grievances, and adopt an address to the Crown. Several of the speakers disclaimed any intention of asking for a reversal of "recent legislation"—the cant expression for free trade; Mr. George Frederick Young disavowed any desire "to revive the controversy of Free Trade versus Protection;" but the old ideas cling to the party still, and come out in every diversity. They now claim, not protection, but reciprocity. They point to a clause which was retained in the Act of Victoria to repeal the coasting laws, empowering her Majesty to impose any prohibitions or restrictions upon the vessels of any country which may be imposed in that country upon English vessels. The grand fact upon which this claim is based is, that if British shipping has increased with British trade, foreign shipping in our ports has increased in a larger proportion.

THE COAL DUES.—A deputation of members of Parliament and manufacturers resident in the Metropolis, waited on Mr. Walpole, on Friday, to press upon him the propriety of inserting provisions for the repeal of the coal dues in the bill to reform the London Corporation to be introduced next session. This tax extends throughout a circle having a radius of 20 miles. The poorest labourer pays 2s. 4d. a year to the Corporation. Some of the paper-makers of Dartford pay as much as £300 a year. Brentford contributes £2,400 a year. It seems the tax, according to counsel's opinion, will not cease with the cessation of the present dues, but that old taxes granted by James I. and William and Mary, and a tax on sea-borne coal, will revive; while the tax on coal brought by railway will cease. There will then be a difference of 1s. in favour of coals brought by rail. The effect of this upon the coasting trade is apparent. Mr. Walpole promised to consider the subject attentively. "The tax having been continued until 1862, will it be wise to deal with it in 1859? He should like to see the case submitted for counsel's opinion."

SIR F. B. HEAD'S COMMISSION TO PARLIAMENT.—Sir F. Head has written another long letter to the "Times" in defence of the imperial régime in France. He concludes the letter with the following suggestion:—"The history of England records that there is no difficulty, no danger, no unpopularity, that the British Parliament, when the safety, honour, and welfare of their country are concerned, are not ready to encounter; and accordingly, as early in February next they will probably be convened for the despatch of business; it may safely be left to their wisdom to consider whether or not it would be advisable for the British people, who would all die in defence of the real liberty of their press, to place upon its licentiousness, so far only as regards our foreign relations, those sensible restrictions which protect from defamation the character of every man among us; which the Speaker of our House of Commons enforces upon every member; which the chairman of every public meeting enforces upon its attendants; and which, in every rank of society, firmly represses that description of low, foul language by which the 'free English press,' for six years, has most unjustifiably insulted all classes of people in France."

A DANGEROUS ERROR.—A few days ago a dead body was found floating near Margate, and as it was discovered to be pierced with holes a suspicion of foul play was excited, and a coroner's inquest returned a verdict of wilful murder against some person or persons unknown. At the Thames police-court, subsequently, the mystery was explained by a sailor, who said that about six weeks ago he was on board one of the light ships off Herne Bay, when a dead body floated past. Efforts were made to sink the body, but this being unsuccessful, it was pierced in various places—hence the appearance of ill-usage which it presented. The body is believed to be that of a Newcastle pilot.

* In a field near Huntingdon, among the fens of Ely, sunk to the bottom of the river, burned, laid by the side of headless Charles, according to divers dim traditions.

OPERA AND CONCERTS.

MR. BALFE'S "Satanella" has been brought out at the new "Royal English Opera" with the greatest success. The music (though weak in some portions of the work) is, on the whole, quite worthy of the composer's great reputation, and the piece is in itself ingenious and full of interest. The character of the hero, Count Rupert, for whose worldly advancement, and ultimate spiritual destruction, Satanella is sent upon earth, is of course undertaken by Mr. Harrison. Satanella is alternately a page to assist the Count in his schemes and a species of angel to lure him to perdition. This interesting personage is represented by Miss Pyne. Miss Susan Pyne appears as the Princess Stella—a lady who is burning to marry Count Rupert for the sake of his reputed wealth, and who forsakes him when he falls into distress. Leila (Miss Rebecca Isaacs) is a poor but virtuous foster-sister of the hero. Mr. Weiss is called "Arimanes," who, we believe, is only an inferior demon, whereas the person represented by the singer we have named is the arch-fiend of the infernal regions. He is Satanella's master, and complains that the angel-demon is not bad enough for her place. Mr. Corrie is a corsair, and is attended by a posse of pirates. Mr. St. Albyn is a sincere but unfortunate lover of Leila's, who, of course, will not accept the second tenor as long as she has a chance of obtaining the hand of the first. Mr. Honey is Count Rupert's preceptor—a not very amusing pedant, who quotes examples from the Latin grammar *apropos* of everything and nothing. None of the concerted pieces in the new opera are very remarkable, and the overture is scarcely worth mentioning.

One of the prettiest melodies in the piece is Leila's ballad in the first act, "Our hearts are not our own," which on the first night was encored. Of Mr. Harrison's "Here's to gold," in the gambling scene, (imitated, by-the-by, from "Robert le Diable"), we can only say that it is commonplace. The comic air given to Mr. St. Albyn soon afterwards is light and calculated to become popular. At all events the audience are pleased with it, and it is encored every night. Mr. Harrison has several ballads to sing in the course of the opera. The one which appears to us the best is that which occurs in the second act, "An angel form," &c. It is always redemanded, thanks to its own intrinsic merit, and also to the effective manner in which it is sung, and we have no doubt that it will be considered the tenor song of the opera. Miss Pyne's ballad, "Let not the world," and the scena, "Ah! me," with which the second act commences, are deserving of much praise; and the same admirable vocalist has a charming air in the third act, "Sultana Zulema," which she executes in her usual graceful and finished style. Mr. Weiss has no solo, but he is heard to much advantage in the duet (with Miss Pyne) which forms the commencement of the third act. The opera concludes with an effective trio (in which Satanella behaves in her usual angelic style), leading to a chorus on the subject of the Power of Love, sung by angels, and interrupted here and there by demons. The piece is magnificently put upon the stage, and is thoroughly successful. We have already mentioned that some alterations were contemplated in the audience department of the theatre. These have been carried out with great success. All the seats in the pit (of which there are 750) are arranged like stalls. The grand tier and pit tier have been converted into dress-circles, but the "first tier" is still divided into private boxes.

The first performance in London of Sterndale Bennett's "May Queen" drew a larger number of persons to St. Martin's Hall than we had ever before seen in that building. It was crowded to the (chocolate-and-cream-coloured) ceiling, and numbers of persons were unable to obtain seats in any part of the edifice. It will be remembered that Dr. Bennett's cantata was first brought out last September at the Leeds Festival. The poem is from the pen of Mr. H. F. Chorley, and, in spite of some weak passages, is about the best libretto that has been produced since "sweet music" and "immortal verse" have taken to living on the separate maintenance system. The story is of the simplest kind. The May Queen has a lover whom she pretends not to love, and, in a coquettish mood, encourages the addresses of Robin Hood. Hence a dispute between the two gallants, which is becoming serious, when the Queen of England appears and "restores order." Robin Hood is rejected, and the May Queen marries the lover who loves her. The part of the May Queen is written for a soprano, that of the Queen of England for a contralto. Robin Hood is the bass, and the lover (who is not individualised) is of course the tenor. The chorus is supposed to consist of peasants, who offer their advice to the lovers, and to any one else who may seem to stand in need of it. Thus, when the impertinent Robin Hood proposes to embrace the May Queen, that coquettish young lady exclaims, "Not on my lips!" and the chorus back her up by calling out with one voice, "For shame!" This, of course, has a ludicrous effect; and in Robin Hood's declaration there are two lines which, owing to an injudicious inversion, are lamentably absurd. Here are the two lines in question:—

"Shall those eyes beyond compare
An unseemly cottage hide?"

Now, however much we may admire large eyes, it is impossible to tolerate orbs sufficiently enormous to conceal a cottage. The lines are bad enough to read, but their effect is still more absurd when sung. On the other hand, Robin Hood's ballad is full of spirit. The May Queen's roundelay, "With the carol in the tree," is pretty and graceful, and the other songs and choruses (beginning with the introductory one, "Wake with a smile,") are above the general average of "words for" music.

The "May Queen" is about as long as a one-act opera; and after a serious course of loud emphatic operatic music (lasting sometimes from eight until twelve), we know of nothing that could refresh the weary auditor so much as a hearing of the "May Queen." The fashionable physicians might with advantage prescribe it to their patients, as an alternative, at the end of the season. It is a work with which all must be delighted—musicians, amateurs, and even those who know nothing of the terms of music as an art. It is full of science, and at the same time full of melody and simplicity. At St. Martin's Hall the cantata had not the advantage of being well executed, and yet out of the ten pieces it contains, three were encored. These were the tenor's air "Oh, Maiden," (sung by Mrs. Wilbye Cooper), the May Queen's song with chorus, "When the carol on the tree" (Miss Banks), and Robin Hood's ballad, "It's jolly to hunt," (Mr. Weiss). Mr. Wilbye Cooper sang in place of Mr. Sims Reeves, who was prevented by indisposition from appearing; but it appears to have been intended that Miss Banks should undertake the music of the "May Queen," which at Leeds had been sung by Madame Novello.

A certain interest was given to the closing night at Jullien's by the appearance of Madame Bishop, who may be remembered as having sung with much success at Drury Lane Theatre under Mr. Bunn's management, about eleven years since. During her long absence from England, Madame Bishop has improved as an artist, but her voice is not only less fresh than it was (which might have been expected), but shows unmistakable signs of decay. It is true that everything she sings was encored, but when was a singer not encored at Jullien's concerts? It is a relief to hear a human voice of any kind, after the truly infernal brayings of the wind instruments in the Hymn of Universal Noise and other analogous compositions or arrangements. M. Wieniawski (or M. Wine-and-whiskey, as he is called by the ignorant and facetious) continued to the last to play his "Carnival." Doubtless the piece, as played by the Polish violinist, presents enormous mechanical difficulties, but some of the variations scarcely belong to music; in fact, they remind us of what Dame Juliana Berners calls "the melodious armonie of fowles." Certainly he had earned the right to imitate his compatriot, Erikell (Finns and Poles are, politically speaking, brothers), by his magnificent performance of Mendelssohn's concerto, and of Beethoven's "Kreutzer" sonata—the latter in conjunction with Miss Goddard. Nor could anything have been finer than Wieniawski's (or Wieniawski's) rendering of the "two Russian airs," which he gave with an expression that few singers could have equalled. The tunes, however, are well chosen, and the simple peasants' song contrasts admirably with the wild, reckless gipsy melody which followed it. Let us hope that this great violinist will not be induced to accompany M. Jullien on that grand circumnavigatory tour which the distinguished conductor is said to have in contemplation.

Literature.

Fragmentary Remains of Sir Humphrey Davy. Edited by his BROTHER. London: Churchill and Co.

THIS is a collection of extracts from the correspondence of the late President of the Royal Society, on literary, scientific, personal, and occasionally political subjects, accompanied by a sketch of his life. Sir Humphrey Davy, the editor, need scarcely have given his reasons, in the preface, for laying before the public some of the most interesting and valuable letters that have ever been printed. Everything new that relates to Sir Humphrey Davy will find plenty of readers in England and not a few abroad; but, independently of their associative interest, the epistles, notes, and memoranda, in the present volume are in themselves pleasant, instructive, and sometimes of the highest importance.

Dr. Paris and Dr. Davy himself have already published lives of Sir Humphrey, and many of our readers will remember how charmingly the great man's career has been treated by Mr. Henry Mayhew, in a popular child's book, "The Wonders of Science; or, the Life of Sir Humphrey Davy"; but, in order to make the letters thoroughly intelligible, the present editor has wisely supplied a new memoir, which serves as a new connecting-link, and sometimes throws light upon allusions which otherwise perhaps might be found obscure.

Humphrey Davy was the first-born of five children, and, until he was six years old, lived with his father and mother. His parents, who lived at Penzance, belonged to the middle-class, and "his family," as he is told, "so far back, indeed, as it could be traced, had received a liberal education, and was above the wants which the peasant labourer has to struggle with." But we must hurry over the period of Sir Humphrey's childhood. Suffice it to say, that he went to school at Penzance, and subsequently at Truro; and that in after-life he considered that he owed but little to his studies at either of those places. Nevertheless it appears from one of Sir Humphrey's last letters that he had preserved some happy recollections of the Penzance Grammar-school. In the calm but affecting epistle to Lady Davy, from Rome, commencing, "I am still alive, though expecting every hour to be released," he desires that the interest of £100, that is to say £4, be given annually on his birth-day to the scholars in that establishment, provided that the mayor and corporation will consent to their having a holiday on that day.

Young Davy's self-education did not commence until about a twelvemonth after he had left school, when his apprenticeship to Dr. Berzelius, and the death of his father, seem to have had the effect of making him apply diligently to a course of study. An anecdote, well-authenticated, and which is mentioned by Southey, testifies to his firmness and strength of will at this period. Bitten by a dog, supposed to have been mad, he did not hesitate to cut out the bitten part and rub it with caustic. Readers of Mrs. Gaskell's biography of Charlotte Brontë will remember a similar incident in the life of Emily her sister.

Humphrey Davy left his native place to go to Clifton, where he became the superintendent of a Pneumatic Institution, then about to be established, the main intent of which was to make experiments with gases for the purpose of ascertaining their effect upon various diseases. While at Clifton, he appears to have been on the very threshold of the discovery of anesthetics. "Does not sensibility," he asks, "depend more immediately on respiration?" And shortly afterwards he adds, "As nitrous oxide in its extensive operation appears capable of destroying physical pain, it may probably be used with a vantage during surgical operations in which no great effusion of blood takes place." He remained upwards of two years at Clifton, and then (being only twenty-two years of age) left the Pneumatic Institution to become professor of chemistry at the Royal Institution of Great Britain. His appearance and manners at this time are described by Mr. Cottle, the publisher, in the following words:—"His eye was piercing, and when not engaged in converse was remarkably introverted amounting almost to absence, as though his mind had been pursuing some severe train of thought scarcely to be interrupted by external objects; and from the first interview also his ingenuousness impressed me as much as his mental superiority." While living at Clifton, in the house of Dr. Beddoe, Davy had made the acquaintance of Coleridge and Southey. Of the latter, Mr. Walter Savage Landor, in a letter published in the work before us, says that he united virtue, wisdom, and genius, in a higher degree, and more interfused, than any creature he ever knew. Sir Humphrey appears to have had almost an equally high opinion of him, though, later, for some unexplained reason, the two friends saw and heard but little of one another. "No one," writes Southey, "lived in habits of greater intimacy with Davy during the greater part of his residence at Bristol than I did, but very few letters passed between us." Nevertheless, those which Dr. Davy has succeeded in obtaining show, not only how close and confiding was their friendship, but the high estimation in which Southey held his brother's powers, even as a poet. One day when Southey was speaking of Sir Humphrey, shortly after his decease, he said, with his eyes full of tears, "Davy was a most extraordinary man; he would have excelled in any department of art or science to which he might have directed the powers of his mind." Some one asked Southey whether he might have been a poet. "Yes," was the reply; "he had all the elements of a poet; he only wanted the art. I have read beautiful verses of his." And then he added, "When I went to Portugal I left it to Davy to revise and publish my poem of 'Thalaba.'"

When Coleridge was asked by Cottle what he thought of Davy, in comparison with the cleverest men he had seen in London, he answered, "Why, Davy could eat them all. There is an energy, an elasticity in his mind, which enables him to seize on and analyse all questions; pushing them to their legitimate consequences. Every subject in Davy's mind has the principle of vitality. Living thoughts spring up like turf under his feet." Naturally, Coleridge's are the best letters in the whole volume, and some of the most interesting are those of Davy to and concerning Coleridge. "His will is less than ever commensurate with his ability," we are told. "Brilliant images float upon his mind like images of the morning clouds upon the waters." Elsewhere, he talked in the course of an hour of beginning three works. "Elsewhere, just after he has received a letter from Coleridge, he says, 'God bless him! He was intended for a great man. I hope and trust he will, at some period, appear such.' And in another place we are told that, 'with the most exalted genius, enlarged views, sensitive heart, and enlightened mind, he will be the victim of want of order, precision, and regularity.' When Coleridge, shattered in health, was about to start for the Mediterranean, Davy wrote him a letter, full of wisdom and affection, which commenced thus: 'My mind is distracted, and my body harassed, by many labours; yet I cannot suffer you to depart without endeavouring to express to you some of the unbroken and higher feelings of my spirit, which have you at once for their cause and object;' and which concludes as follows:—"May blessings attend you, my dear friend. Do not forget me. We live for different ends, and with different habits and pursuits, but our feelings, with regard to each other, have, I believe, never altered. They must continue—they have no natural death; and I trust, they can never be destroyed by future chance or accident."

When Sir Walter Scott heard that Dr. Davy was collecting materials for his brother's life (published in 1836), he wrote to remind him that it was Sir Humphrey who was described by Coleridge in his "Sibylline Leaves," as the individual who would have established himself in the first rank of England's living poets if the genius of our country had not decreed that he should rather be the first in the first rank of its philosophers and scientific benefactors. Sir Walter adds, that it was he who first mentioned the verses that led to the discussion, and that he had himself "heard his deceased friend repeat poetry of the highest order of composition."

One of the great epochs in Davy's life, was his discovery of the metallic bases of the fixed alkalies, which is also an era in the history of chemistry. About five years afterwards he left the Royal Institu-

But since I've had the gout I'm grown much quieter. The doctor says I was always a delicate child, and that mamma has spoiled me with too many good things. Now I am reformed. I never eat anything but dry toast, and all my money I save up for my old age. In the savings' bank I have nearly four pounds standing in my name, besides the eighteen shillings I lent James, and for which he is to give me half-a-sovereign for interest. This Christmas I am to have, by the doctor's orders, only one slice of turkey, half a mince pie, and just a taste of the plum-pudding. So I don't suppose I shall enjoy myself much. I must see if cook—who is very fond of me—cannot be wheedled out of some thing. As for taking the three bottles of medicine and the box of pills that have just arrived, I'll die first. They are of a muddy brown colour, and smell awfully.



CAUGHT IN THE SNOW.—(DRAWN BY JULES DAVID.)



THE SCHOOLBOY'S DREAM OF CHRISTMAS: "HOW J-J-JOLLY!"—(DRAWN BY KENNY MEALOWS.)

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CONCERNING PLUM PUDDING

If there be one thing more than another that makes me unforgettingly angry with the old Puritans of the Commonwealth, it is their persistent refusal to eat plum pudding on Christmas day. Butler, in " Hudibras," taunted them with their aversion to the harmless amalgam of suet, flour, dried fruit, and spices. They had an equal repugnance, according to the immortal satirist, to "fat pig and goose," and were in the habit of denouncing custard, "through the nose." In "Old Mortality," we all remember how bitterly Cuddie Headdrigg reproaches the assiduous Mauser for prohibiting him from eating the "minch pies" and "plum parritch," distributed at Christmas time by the bountiful lady of Tullibudlem. It is curious, but true, that the Puritans, who emigrated to the New World in the *Mayflower*, took with them this hatred of plum pudding at Christmas, together with the other

phernalia of their *odium theologicum*; and the Pilgrim Fathers, landed on the rock of Plymouth, as inveterately prejudiced against the dainty—so delightfully characterised in Mr. Dickens's "Christmas Carol"—as a "speckled cannon-ball"—as against Episcopacy, Ecclesiastical vestments, and altar furniture. Some American friends tell me that plum pudding, in its Christmas sense, is not, even at this time, understood in the United States. Our cousins eat it, but at unseasonable periods; and there are grouse is unlawful, salmon unwholesome, and red deer venison unfit for human food. Virginia, the old dominion, sometimes eats plum pudding at Christmas in conservative memory of its connection with the British monarchy; there is even, I believe, in the neighbourhood of Richmond, an old Tory gentleman who speaks of "my Lord Bellamont," mentions the War of Independence as "the late unnatural

rebellion fomented by Mr Washington," and wears powder and a pig-tail. But in the New England States, the descendants of Cotton Mather pass Christmas day by without plum pudding. They consume it, instead, with turkey, goose, minced pies, and canvas-backed ducks, on a special festival of their own, whose falling due is determined by the Governor of the State, and which is called "Thanksgiving-day." The weather has been known to be broilingly hot on the day of *thanksgiving*. Shame! They might as well eat their plum pudding on Independence-day, the fourth of July, or we in England have a sprat supper on the first of May.

"There is mint, and anise, and cummin," says the moralist; and there is—

"Plum pudding hot, plum pudding cold,
Plum pudding in the pot nine days old."



GOING HOME AFTER THE PARTY.—(DRAWN BY A. BLADE.)

says the Nursery Rhyme. And one of the chiefest charms to me now of plum pudding—for I confess that my digestion is not what it used to be, and that I should hesitate ere I ate a pound and a half of pudding, cold, before dinner—is the connection of the glorious Christmas dish with the days of childhood and of youth. I would rather count the bygone years by my puddings than by my wrinkles.

There were two Christmas days in my early life without plum pudding. (Catastrophe number one was, that the cook swallowed the pudding (and a considerable additional quantity) intended for the pudding; and, among unseemly songs, became uproarious, and finally sat down in the fender among the plates and dishes, scattered the pudding to the four winds of heaven, and had to be removed by the police. Catastrophe number two was, that the cook's young man (she was also parleur-maid), excited by malevolence or jealousy, entered the kitchen

while his intended was waiting at dinner—and, the ruffian!—stole the pudding out of the copper, and walked away with it. He was never seen again; but I am persuaded that he was subsequently hanged, somewhere in the Midland Counties, under a feigned name. I had black dose for breakfast and beef tea for dinner on another Christmas day; but I did not care, for they were administered by kind hands. A lonely little boy, at a huge French school, left behind for the holidays, I ate twenty years since in a deserted playground. Christmas-day itself is not observed as a feast in Catholic countries: the great eating and drinking season is New Year's-day; so, at dusk and dinner time, I was bidden to a cheerful repast of lentil soup, fresh-boiled beef, haricot beans, and stewed pears, washed down by vinegar and water that passed by courtesy for wine. Little did the only remaining usher, as he patted and patted me on the head because I did

not eat, thinking that home-sickness had quite taken away my appetite—little did that good-natured *prou* reckon that in my play-box lay snugly hidden the last tooth-serrated fragment of a mighty lump of cold plum-pudding, made specially for me at the English pastrycook's in the Rue Royale, from an approved Britannic recipe efficiently carried out under jealous supervision, furtively deposited at the porter's lodge, and thence surreptitiously conveyed in to school. My pocket-money for a month went to bribe that porter. Another Christmas I remember—I was very little; in a skeleton suit and frill—tunics and belts had not come in—when I fell into sad disgrace at the most critical part of dinner, just after the turkey, and, horrible and inhuman edict, was ordered to bed prior to the arrival of the pudding. How the searching odour of the superlative dish, ascending from the kitchen to my bedroom of bondage, nearly threw me into convulsions; how I fell into a

gobbling sleep and dream of blood-red puddings; how I was paroled about tea-time, and was gratified then with more pudding than I should have had at dinner time; how all my brothers and sisters had pocketed portions of their share of pudding to console me for my lost portions which were afterwards handed to me in different stages of stickiness, and with divers foreign substances adhering thereto; how, before Twelfth-night, being then of a poetical turn, I composed a ballad on my mishap, for which Uncle James, who died, gave me a bright new St. George-and-the-Dragon crown piece; are not, or rather were not, all these things written in the Nursery Chronicles of the Scriblerus family—chronicles torn up, burned, their ashes scattered far and wide, years ago?

So of a Christmas I think—one of the happiest—years afterwards, when a tall man, with a flushed face and a white head, proposed my health in a speech which made my ears tingle with delight, all the men applaud, and half the women cry. He bade God bless me, and exactly one month afterwards he very nearly ruined me for life. Another, when I travelled a hundred and twenty miles in order to pass the day with the object of my affections; but happening to quarrel mortally with that young person on Christmas-eve, after Sturdragon time, went back the hundred and twenty miles the next day per train, indulging in bad language throughout the entire journey. Of another, and economical Christmas-day, when, at the outset of life, being in London, quite alone and friendless, I yet determined to keep up Christmas, and so dined at a slap-bang eating-house, where I had sixpennyworth of roast beef—I had not the heart to order turkey—and threepennyworth of plum-pudding, and afterwards treated myself to a glass of hot rum-and-water at a nifty little tavern in Soho, in which I pledged myself and absent friends. I bought a pennyworth of holly, too, in the morning, but felt very much inclined to cut my throat with its crisp, jagged leaves at night. Of another, a fearful Christmas-day, when no one thought of Christmas dinners, and I sat at the head of a coffin propped up, while at the end an artist leaned on ivory the evanishing features of one very near and dear to me. And of a vexatious Christmas-day, on which I had made up my mind to be especially jolly, but was led down to the places of captivity the evening before, pounced on by alguazils, on the complaint of a certain roguish muleteer, who said I owed him pistoles, and so dragged before the corregidor, who would not listen to reason—(Gil Sotomayor he was bright—but clapped me up straightway in the Tower of Segovia, where I lay all beef-and-pudding day, howling, and with nought save vile *olla podrida* to eat.

"Every man," according to the dishonest politician, "has his price," and each of us has his hobby, his fault, his madness, and his Venus—whether she be of the Medicean or of the Hotentot build. So, also, almost every one of us has his favourite plum pudding, his peculiar recipe, professing not to abide any other. I frankly admit that I have mine, and that I am prejudiced. Suet chopped fine, eggs, milk, one glass of cognac sugar, allspice, cinnamon, chopped citron, currants, *sultana* raisins—not *plums*, mind; vigorous, oh! such vigorous stirring with a wooden spoon on Christmas Eve, a careful night-watch, ten juvenile filibusters should make raids upon the dulcet and delicious sausage meat, and seven hours—yes, Mrs. S., I think that is the time—boiling in a new pudding-cloth, well-floured. And I also think that the pudding-maker should be a prodigal with the eggs, and a miser with the flour. You will observe that I am not in the least ashamed of discoursing on this humble domestic matter; for I think it behoves every male creature to know something about plum pudding making. Consider, ye—erest, we men might be beleaguered in an Indian mad fort on Christmas-day; we might be hiding from wild Indians in a dismal swamp; we might have lost our way in the Australian bush; or be abandoned to our own resources on a desert island. I don't want man to be rendered thoroughly independent of the other sex: there are always certain things that she can do better than he, but man ought to be taught how to do them *somehow*—to sew on a button, to make a bed, yes, and to tuck up a little child, and fold its soft hands in prayer to Our Father, and to make a pudding. There would be fewer communities of painted savages or shipwrecked desperadoes on Melusian rafts, spiling the spirit casks, contemplating cannibalism, and anon knife-drawing and chasing each other off the frail planks into the hungry ocean; fewer sullen wretches brooding tentless in muddy siege-trenches, ragged, undermined, half-famished, scorching their green coffee or singing lumps of salt pork on bayonet points, if man would condescend to learn some few simple arts from woman.

I am naturally tolerant—needing so much toleration myself; but I plead guilty to a stern desire to invoke the Inquisition, the *chambre ardente*, all the terrors of the rack, the cord, the pulleys, the "water torture," the "little ease," the "scavenger's daughter," the bilboes, the thumb-screws, the boots, the pitch-cap, the torrid tar and penal plumes of Lynch law against the heretics who put such destruction as bread-crumbs, almonds, huge lumps of citron, showers of spice, treacle, and strong ale into plum puddings: who convert the "speckled cannon ball" into a vile, alluvial-looking mass of cloying black sweetstuff. Fetch me the *San benitos* for these impudent pudding makers! Quick, send for the officers of the *Santa Hermandad*, and let me have an *auto da fe* on the Plaza Mayor forthwith. Incinerate these seiolists with their puddings about their necks. Do ye know, O ye perverse ones, what irreparable injuries your condimented figments cause to the duodena of the children? what rich stacks of fees and physic bills you accumulate for Messrs. Swoy and Moore, banes of infancy, and the awful Mr. Fitnistrura, M.R.C.S., and ogre of the nursery?

Not but that there may be other puddings better than mine: though, as Mr. T. Percy Jones said of his spasmodic tragedy "Firmilian"—"I should very much like to see them." At all events, I should not at all object to the establishment of a Plum Pudding Club, composed of Christmas-loving *cordons bleus*, who should meet at stated times during the festive season, compare notes, exchange recipes, hold pudding conversations, and exhibit specimens for mutual improvement. I have, myself, much to learn concerning sauce, and the proper mode of burning brandy.

Only: one thing in conclusion. Be anti-Gallican enough to hold this true, that no Frenchman can, under any circumstances, make a plum pudding. It is not in him, pudding-making comes not within the scope of the *esprit gaulois*. "The meteor flag of England," its crosses emblazoned on a pudding cloth, "shall yet terrific burn," in defiance of the tricolour. I will not dwell upon the hackneyed taunt about the Duke of Northumberland's French cook, who, during that nobleman's embassy to Paris, made a plum pudding according to recipe, and accurately enough, but forgot the cloth, and sent the pudding up to table in a soup tureen, veritable porridge. But even poor dear old Soyer, who had lived long enough in England to cook almost every English dish, failed in plum pudding, wholly. I remember, long since, his presenting me with a nighty lump of cold pudding, a rich crumb fallen from the table of some public entertainment. I took it to a very near and dear relative—both the cook and referee are dead, alas! and we formed a committee of taste on it at once. I like cold plum pudding, but we agreed that this was not at all the thing. We happened, at the time, to have a pantomime running at a London theatre; and, as most people carry a bit of plum pudding in their waistcoat pocket or their reticule, on boxing-day, to taste and compare, it so fell out that a portion of Soyer's pudding came under the criticism of a young and beautiful *coryphée*. It was very black and very rich, and she, *frimide* little thing, pronounced it delicious. By mutual consent, then, we presented the lump of cold pudding, with a neat speech in the green-room, as a testimonial to the *corps de ballet*. But when "everybody was called at eleven" in the forenoon of the 27th of December, for the purpose of "cutting" our pantomime, there was such an array of pale faces among the *corps de ballet*! Indigestion had done its work. We were received with a murmur of execration. I boldly pleaded Soyer in extenuation; but it was clear that the choreographic troupe looked upon us as respiratory centres of the Marchioness and Brimadilles and Eliza Fanning.

Pardon me for striding to such serious toxicological matters in connection with plum pudding. I was then but a bunch of hyacinths in

the bowl of Christmas "lamb's-wool." But, hark! what is that sound? Lam called away to taste an embryo pudding, made according to my recipe. Let every Christmas-loving reader straightway imitate the example.

G. A. S.

COMING HOME FROM A PARTY IN THE LAKE DISTRICT.

"Where is the grave of Sir Arthur Orlean?"
Where may the grave of that good knight be,
On the slope of a hill by the side of Helvellyn,
Under the shade of a young birch tree,
The knight's bones are dust,
And his sword is rust,
And his soul is with the saints, we trust!"

We wonder whether any thoughts of Coleridge's beautiful lines come over the merry Christmas party returning home through the lovely lake country this wintry night. It is almost impossible for any educated person to plead ignorance of the works of Coleridge, Wordsworth, Southey, or Shelley while residing in the neighbourhood of the Lakes of Cumberland or Westmoreland. The landscape is so intimately mixed up with the poetry, and the poetry with the landscape—only the very common people can't understand what there should be poetical in the great snow-clad fells and umbrageous valleys. It was a Westmoreland woman, we think, a neighbour of William Wordsworth, who, on being asked if she knew anything of the habits of the great lake poet, replied that he was a "vera bounny mon, an' decent behaved to childer, except when he went among the woods an' burns *hoo'in his poetry*!"—reciting his poetry, she meant. However, it is very possible that the party of Christmas merry-makers are thinking more about the polkas and the deux temps, the forfeits and the round games, the supper and the flirtations, of the festive day they have just left, than of the poetical associations of the grand scenery around them. They don't seem to mind the distance they have to travel in the least. It is astonishing how far people will come and go in pursuit of pleasure. Twenty miles in a sleigh, over a frozen road, is thought nothing of after a snug evening party in Canada; and who does not recollect that glorious passage in "Never too late to Mend," where a gang of miners go nearly a day's journey in order to hear the song of a skylark?

A LAWYER'S CHRISTMAS STORY.

CHAPTER I.

In the vicinity of the Strand, near Holywell Street, is a dingy, respectable square, termed, by the undeserved courtesy of centuries, an Inn—Lyon's Inn. It is inhabited by attorneys of a certain class,—indeed, of a very certain class. Unhappy wags, forced to transact business relating to pecuniary claims of an usurious character, and necessitating the payment of "costs," have re-named the dismal pile "Lions' Den," "Lions' Inn," "Wolves' Inn," and a list of other fanciful designations, according to the unfortunate joker's peculiar idiosyncrasy. It has been built with an evident view to the temporal misery of the occupants. The rooms—we beg pardon, chambers,—when not absolutely situated upon the third floor, seem to try to look as though they did, by exhibiting that closeness, dinginess, and general appearance of discomfort and "cramp," which is, if at all, to be found especially on the third floor of an old house. The air of its miserable square smells musty and rat-like, from having been breathed over and over again for many years by seely attorneys who have span their legal cobwebs, plotted, and gained money, without growing rich, within its precincts.

In one of the dingiest of these chambers there sat once, on the day before Christmas-day, perhaps the dirtiest attorney ever seen, and Mr. Freackle was that attorney. At that time—for we are speaking of some few years ago—the name of Freackle was familiar to the inmates of debtors' jails. He and his agents permeated the prisons. If you had once seen one of Freackle's agents, and you had met another anywhere else in the world, you would at once have known the profession, habits, and social standing of the second. You shall see one of them (mentally) presently; and if you should ever wish to see another, physically, (which is highly improbable) you may find him any day between the hours of ten and five, standing in the street, outside any police-court, engaged in conversation with two bedraggled women and a man of sinister aspect.

Mr. Freackle was seated in his office. His business at the moment consisted in the preparation of an insolvency schedule for one of his best and therefore most dishonest clients, who had already been insolvent four times. Mr. Freackle's hair was short, red, and straight, his eyes were small and keen, his complexion was cloudy and tallowy, and his body was short and emaciated. For a dreadful thing about Mr. Freackle was his asthma. Often and often while a trembling defendant stood before him, and while Freackle was in the act of threatening him with ruin, or extorting rapaciously the utmost possible farthing of costs, on would come the terrible asthma, and the convulsive cough, rending the attorney's chest, seemed to tell of Nature and Providence asserting themselves even in the deepest recesses of his wicked bosom.

A tap at Mr. Freackle's door caused him to raise his head, and this was followed by the entry of his agent, Mr. Gopus. Mr. Gopus, a tall man with a long red nose, appeared to have selected his costume with an especial desire not to be mistaken for a person habitually earning an honest livelihood. He was attired in rusty black, torn, mended, patched, and worn, one might imagine, to the utmost limits of the fibre. Yet Gopus had worn those clothes for years, they had been originally as shabby as they were then, he wears them now, and they still present the same aspect. His hat was a curiosity. From brim to crown the lines of fracture, the memorials of vulgar brawls and drunken tumbles, deviated and intersected like the railway lines on the map of England. To keep it from collapsing, as it might have done like a bag, an artful system of scaffolding was established in the interior by means of splints of firewood. His boots were splayed out into the form of flat fish. They were slashed across, *modo tempore* Henry VIII., not for fashion's sake, but to relieve painful disorder, to which Mr. Gopus was subject in his lower limbs. And on Mr. Gopus's face was imprinted, in that handwriting which all but the direst of dupes and dunces can read—Scoundrel and Sot. To call him Mr. Freackle's agent was perhaps much the same thing.

"Ha, Gopus!" began Mr. Freackle; "I expected you. Christmas is close enough now. Merry Christmas—oh! ugh-r-r! ough!—oh, oh!"

"Yes," replied Gopus, "that fellow Bradley, you know. I meant to have come yesterday, but the fact is, I—I wasn't very well. He's at his work to-day, and leaves at three o'clock, being Christmas-eve. He doesn't know but what Taylor paid the bill before he bolted, and has no idea the writ's out. Safe to pay, if took at Christmas. So, if you'll oblige me with the half-crown, I'll get the warrant and appoint old Nason."

"Well," observed Freackle, "on the whole, I think I'll do that myself. You might lose it, you know, or he taken *not very well*." Mr. Freackle delighted in sarcasm. Certainly all sarcastic men are not bad, but it is a singular thing that all bad men are, or try to be, sarcastic. "Meanwhile you can stop here, and—oh—copy this writ. When I come in you may serve it."

"You never paid me the fourpence for serving Sims on Monday," threw in Gopus.

"No, nor don't mean to, you old scamp. See here," and Freackle drew forth a dirty yellow slip of parchment. "You never indorsed it, and the service goes for nothing."

"But I can swear I did, and who's to know?" asked the agent.
"What? perjury! No, no, 'specially as there's no occasion for it. He's defending, so that it doesn't matter. I shan't proceed, so I'm five bob out of pocket already." And Freackle left the chamber, muttering ecstatically to himself, "Done him out of that fourpence, by Jove! Ha—ha—ha—oh! hah! hum! yoo! ough-r-r! oh my chest!" And the banisters vibrated as he grasped them for support in his transient glee.

CHAPTER II.

The clerks in the mercantile establishment of Brodribb and Co. were closing their books on the afternoon of the day on which the events just recorded took place in the office of Mr. Freackle, when Mr. Brodribb entered from the inner-office to dismiss them for their Christmas holiday. As he came into the office of the clerks, they descended from their stools, and stood as he addressed them:

"Gentlemen, I thank you for your punctuality and attention during the past half-year. One of you only has found it necessary to squish his situation. No one, more deeply than this firm, feels his unfortunate career. I trust that it may furnish an example without its use to all present. I wish that his misfortune had been shared by at least one amongst you" (here he glanced at Edmund Bradley, a junior of about twenty-one years of age), "who, from kindly motives, has been a pecuniary loser by his fellow-clerk's default. I mention this before you all, because I trust the lesson to be salutary. Upon this reproof only, and in consideration of Bradley's general conduct, we have resolved to overlook the infraction. But, henceforth, let it be understood that any clerk spending money, or the use of his name, to another, will be dismissed this house. Mr. Bradley, will you kindly inform me if any proceedings have been taken thereon?"

Edmund Bradley blushed and stammered forth—"None, sir, beyond what you know. Mr. Taylor wrote to me solemnly assuring me that he would arrange the matter before leaving England, and has now been away six weeks, and I have heard no more of him, therefore, no doubt it is settled."

"Very well," replied Mr. Brodribb. "A good deal of business at least was shared by us. I am sure you will not be in error. On any future occasion, however, and we will not forget it, gentlemen, I wish you to be very Christmas. In the meantime, will you all be so good as to look after your services."

So saying, he shook hands with each of them, and as he put on his hat, he observed to Edmund Bradley:

"The governor's a real brick!" observed Jack Fowler, as he left the street, arm-in-arm with Edmund Bradley. "But what was about your pecuniary transaction with Taylor? Had you been lending him money?"

"No—not exactly," replied Edmund. "I had been silly enough to put my name to a bill, and on the very day after he left, there was a row writ against me left at the office. Afterwards, another served on me. I was in hope, until now, the governor had not seen the first. However, it's all over now."

"What—have you paid it?"

"No, but I believe Taylor has, for I have heard no more of since."

"Well, good-bye, old fellow," said Jack. "A Merry Christmas!" and so they parted.

Scarcely had Jack vanished when a stout man bore down upon Edmund.

"Mr. Edmund Bradley, I believe?"

"Certainly," answered the clerk.

"All right—you are my prisoner!" And the stout person, Edmund's arm, and led him, bewildered, to a small room, where a red-haired man, lounging carelessly by, with a pair of legs wheezing and coughing, and throwing his arms round a support, clung to it for support, as Edmund was driven off towards Lane.

CHAPTER III.

The gig drew up before a door, of which a lantern-light was ornamented by a lattice of iron bars. A heavy bolt was drawn, and a large key turned in the lock, before the door turned upon its hinges. The Jew skipped down from the vehicle, and offered Edmund his hand to assist him to alight. The bare hand was so dirty and repulsive in its configuration, that the prisoner shrank from its contact as he would have done from the touch of a reptile. He entered, and was at once conducted into a kind of reception-room on the first floor. This apartment seemed to be an ingenious cross between a public-house parlour and a prison. Iron bars secured the windows, and round the room were placed wooden settees, bordering coarsely-made tables. A brisk fire was burning, and two or three men lounged about, with that aspect of utterly hopeless laziness which the institution of imprisonment appears to have been specially invented to create and foster. The men gazed upon him for a moment with a listless curiosity which appeared to be satisfied with a single glance. It seemed to say, "We knew you would come, but didn't exactly know what you were like; now we see, and are content."

Now, if Edmund had speculated at all upon his reception, he would probably have calculated upon every one's utter astonishment at an entrance in such a form and unexpected case. That the shock to him should excite no similar sensation in others, seemed for the time to cause him a double pang.

Edmund instantly thought of his employers. Alas! Mr. Brodribb had departed for his mansion at Brighton, by the half-past three train. His fellow-clerks—where were they? Dispersed, heaven only knew whither! And even if found, which of them might be certainly reckoned upon as having the means and inclination to release him? His parents, who in a few hours' time would be hoping to meet him, resided in Berkshire. It was hopeless—hopeless!

The men began to lead him into conversation. Edmund felt it a relief to tell even these strangers the details of his sorrow. When he had concluded, one of them burst into a laugh, and another observed that it was clever of Freackle. Sharp man, that!

So passed the dreary afternoon. Nason, the Hebrew of the gig, after finally bolting and barring the lower part of the house, came up stairs. He announced, in a way that showed his firm belief in the immense benevolence and religious toleration exhibited in the act, that on that particular night in the year, he always stood "easy hot" to his visitors. The men in the hall greeted this with a cheer. Edmund alleged illness, and was shown up stairs, into a back bedroom for the night. There he cast himself upon the bed, and, for the first time since his childhood, wept. Meanwhile, from the room below, jovial sounds of mirth and merry choruses, in which the deep bass twang of Mr. Nason himself was most unpleasantly pre-eminent, started the echoes of Chancery Lane.

The sounds at length ceased. Footsteps, more or less unsteady, were heard ascending stairs and diverging into chambers. Edmund scarcely repressed an exclamation of sudden agony, as he heard his own door locked outside. And then he began calmly examining into the feasibility of a project which was dawning upon his mind. He then occupied himself in twisting his bed-clothes into a rope, which he secured the trusty knot known to sailors as "two half hitches." He turned up the mattress, and cut the rope which held the sacking. This he divided into two portions. Again he silently raised the window, and fastened the end of his sheet-rope securely to the iron stanchions of the window; then he extinguished his light.

Now the iron bars were thus disposed, and were about six feet apart—

Edmund tied one of his two pieces of rope securely round one of the two inner bars, and its outside supporter into a loose loop. Then he introduced the poker, which he found in the fire-place, sliding the band to the vertical centre of the bar, formed a powerful instrument, to be used like a surgeon's tourniquet. Twisting this





"WHY, MARY MUST BE ASLEEP!"—(DRAWN BY J. PASQUIER.)



OUR CHRISTMAS NUMBER.—(DRAWN BY J. PASQUIER.)

"MARY MUST BE ASLEEP."

This is the age of sympathy. Universal philanthropists go about in express trains, stopping at first-class hotels, and seeking out "needy knife-grinders," whom they press to tell their "pitiful story," assuring them that "tears of compassion tremble on their eyelids," ready to fall so soon as they have told their tale. But they will see them broiled before they give them sixpence, nevertheless. Now there is a class—two classes, in fact, one talkative, the other dumb—whom the universal philanthropists seem utterly to have forgotten, but whom I, for my part, think deserving of substantial sympathy and relief. I allude to the servants, and the hours they have to wait in the cold, with our cabs and our carriages, when we are enjoying ourselves at an evening party. Cold comfort it is, indeed, for our faithful servants to have to remain for a couple of hours half-frozen on the coach box, or tramping to and fro on the pavement, vainly endeavouring to warm themselves by thrashing their sides and shoulders with their crossed arms. Within, all is light, gaiety, and warmth. We acquire even so much caloric in dancing, that we are fain to eat ices in the depth of winter. We have hot neguses and spiced drinks to compose us, if we don't dance, have remained sedentary, playing cards, and feel chilly. We are snugly cloaked and shawled, scarved with emollient *peluche*, or enveloped in Inverness capes, before we undertake the short journey from the hall-door to the carriage-step; then we have the comfortable ride home on the softly-padded cushions and squab-linings; we, complacent with the thoughts of the cherry-forests and the abundant supper, glowing with a hundred comfortable memories. Outside, John the footman shivers, and Thomas the coachman's nose is blue. Well may provident portboys bring them mugs of "fettled" beer, and other warm liquids, as they sit on their weary night-watch; well may they smoke surreptitious pipes of tobacco: I say surreptitious, for only imagine the indignation of the Countess of Erminetip, or Alderman Sir Rowley Powley, if, leaving their high jinks a little before their time, they were to discover the silver wigged coachman bringing disgrace on the hammercloth by puffing at a blackened dhudeen, or the stalwart footman compromising his plated buttons by inhaling the fumes of an attenuated cheroot! Now they manage these things better, even in Russia. When the noble boyards frequent their assemblies, their masquerades, or their grand opera, huge circular stoves blaze in the snow outside, and the coachmen and footmen (wrapped, besides, to the nose in furs and sheepskins) gather round the miniature *Etna* of embers, and make themselves merry with warmth. To be sure, if this slight precaution of humanity were omitted, a few Ivans or Fedors would be found frozen to death after every performance of "Lucrezia Borgia," or the "Etoile du Nord." As to the poor horses, they are in lamentable case indeed. You may well cover them up with rugs and horsecloths, but who is to clear the frosty rime from their eyelashes, and their patient noses? Please to remember that horses have chests and feet to catch cold in. I declare there ought to be a fund to provide woollen comforters and cork soles for the horses, which are compelled to do duty outside evening party-giving houses; and I never hear the lamentable cough of a London night cab-horse, wheezing through the wintry air, without an uneasy sensation that there ought to be mangers full of Iceland moss, and troughs full of cod-liver oil, provided for the poor consumptive beasts at the street corners.

Now I can't help thinking that the ingenious artist who has delineated the charming picture you are gazing at with us, oh! ye Christmas readers, had some sly notion of retributive justice in his mind, when he drew the highly genteel family who have been disporting themselves at the gayest of evening parties in town, and now find themselves—at perchance, two o'clock in the morning, and at the gates of their own suburban villa—positively locked out. Yes; "Mary must be asleep," to a certainty. That faithful domestic, who was instructed to "wait up" for her masters and mistresses, old and young, and sternly forbidden to venture out for a "bit of ribbing," or to give, herself, a select evening party to her friend in the B division or her cousin in the Grenadier Guards, has, rendered drowsy by the purring cat, the ticking clock, and it may be the driving sleet on the window-panes and the chirping cricket on the hearth, ceded to the seductions of the god of sleep. The unconscious domestic snores, and meanwhile the gay party are waiting in the cold, ringing a succession of astonishing "triple bob majors," on the gate-bell, and so far as Paterfamilias and Materfamilias are concerned, indulging in very ominous mutterings bearing on "Mary" and a "month's warning." As for the young people, they rather like it than otherwise; regarding the delay as only part and parcel of that Christmas fun, which commenced when they left school for the holidays, and which has gone on accumulating in juvenile balls, parties, pantomimes, dinners, twelfth cakes, visits to the bazaars and Christmas-trees for the last fortnight. You see, too, that the young gentleman, who not so long ago assumed the *toga virilis*, regards the neglect of Mary to answer the bell as a highly convenient opportunity for making advances of a practically sentimental nature to the pretty girl with whom he has danced so persistently, and whom he has caught so many times at blind-man's-buff in the course of the evening. Ring again, and again. Surely that last peal must awaken Mary. It seems loud enough to arouse the Seven Sleepers. I wonder whether sly John Coachman is chuckling a little in his great-coated sleeve, and murmuring: "I wonder how missus likes waitin' in the cold?" Of a surety that charioter has waited often enough at later hours, and on colder nights.

G. A. S.

OUR CHRISTMAS NUMBER.

TWENTY years since, nearly, the Penny Postage system, elaborated by Mr. Rowland Hill, and subsequently developed under his auspices with such astonishing success, frightened the British Isles—not exactly from their propriety, but from the beaten track of slow-coach letter-distribution which had been marked out for them by a succession of drowsy postmasters. The days when the post-office was to be regarded merely as a neat appanage of royalty, giving a few thousands per annum to some by-blow of the Crown, were to exist no more. The easy-going dynasty of the predecessors of Sir Francis Freeling was destined to slumber henceforward in peace. Members of Parliament were to be no longer hunted up by their unconscionable constituents for "franks." The "wopenny postman" was to be superseded by his more active penny rival; henceforth and to come, all was to be bustle, expedition, and celerity in St. Martin's-le-Grand. The promises so triumphantly made, have been, we are bound to admit, very satisfactorily fulfilled. One by one the features of the old postal system faded away; the old cogs and checks of the clumsy mechanism of the past, when a letter to Liverpool cost eight, and one to North Britain twenty pence, and the most eminent commercial and banking firms resorted, positively, to smuggling whole boxes full of letters in order to save the extravagant postage to foreign parts; these relics of the pigtail century preceeding, were very summarily swept away for ever. Gradually, too, some familiar usages connected with the unreformed Post fell into desuetude. The annual procession of mail coaches with the drivers in their new scarlet liveries, and the satin-skinned horses, with their new harness, which perambulated the streets of the metropolis on May Day, going even so far as Buckingham Palace, where the guard turned out to salute the ruddy drivers, and the loud-trumpeting guards who always carried such good things in the boot—these processions were discontinued. Then the postman, and his leathern bag, and his handbell suggestive of muffins, but really proclaiming "late" post-time, and the compulsory payment of extra pennies, ceased to perambulate our thoroughfares. Then the prematurely middle-aged looking boys, mounted on those wretched looking hacks—though all assured to be originally blood of Irish descent—and bearing letter bags—grew rarer and rarer; the yearly increasing network of railways rendered less frequent, even, the apparition on our suburban roads of the trim, rapidly driven mail carts and phaetons. Postage-stamps, post-office money-orders, registered letters, district offices, pillar letter-boxes, lamp-post placards, the letter-carriers' omnibus, the scarlet tunic in lieu of the absurd swallow-tailed coat, the book and parcel post—what astonishing improvements, reforms, revolutions we may call them, without much exaggeration, have, with light-

ning rapidity, succeeded one another in our postal administration since Rowland Hill came to his kingdom! How angry we are, now, if a letter be a couple of hours behind its time in delivery, if a note superscribed "Mr. John Smith, London," does not immediately reach its destination, and secure us an answer by return. How hard we are on the postal officials if the half-sovereigns we persist in enclosing in our missives, and in defiance of the reiterated cautions of the postmasters, do from time to time prove too much for the probity of some impoverished letter-carrier, and are extracted from our ill-gummed, carelessly directed envelopes!

Speaking of envelopes, many of our readers will bear in remembrance that marvellous design for a postal-frank envelope, to be used in lieu of the affixed stamp, due to the graphic invention either of Mulready or Maclise, which afforded so much exercise to the risible faculties of the quidnuncs of twenty years since. There was Britannia, and the Lion, and Cupid, and Mercury—and, for aught we know, Mars, Apollo, and Vivorum—showering letters, all duly pre-paid, over the surface of the habitable globe. There were elephants and palanquins, Chinese mandarins and Indian rajahs, personages mystical and personages mythological, all mixed up in an astounding chaos, though all symmetrically drawn and according to the true principles of the line of beauty. Mr. John Leech, then a very young artist—now deservedly famous as the sheet anchor of effete and senile "Punch"—immediately set to work to caricature the postal envelope of the Royal Academician. He produced a parody of it so imitatively grotesque, yet so humorously faithful to the original, that the walls of this paper Jericho fell at once beneath the blast of the trumpet of ridicule; and the scheme was at once abandoned.

And what, you may not unreasonably ask, has the Post-office reform and the surprising Post-office development of late years to do with our Christmas Number? Why, it has everything to do with it! Without the services of the postman, without the admirably-organised system, that, as it were, flashes our letters and newspapers with telegraphic rapidity through the land, thousands of households would be deprived of the innocent pleasure and amusement, which we hope, in all sincerity, they will derive from the perusal of this, the Christmas Number of the "Illustrated Times." Surely you rustic postman who has brought the welcome packet to the cottage door, merits the mug of cheering ale which is being poured out for him by hospitable hands. He brings instruction for the old folk, he brings fun and merriment to the little folk, he brings joy and solace for all, in the contemplation of cheerful pictures, in the study of honest and pleasant imaginings. Wearisome oft-times is the postman's lengthened tramp; let us bear with him, let us be grateful to him, when he brings us our Christmas literature. Let us strive to ameliorate his not too felicitous condition—not stint him in his Christmas-box, and vote for the increase of his somewhat scanty wages.

A RAMBLING CHRISTMAS STORY.

BOTH AN OLD AND A COMMON STORY, TOLD IN A MOST INCOMPREHENSIBLE MANNER, BY THOMAS BUNTEY, IN THE COACHMAKING LINE.

GENTLEMEN all and ladies all, I wish you a happy time at this festive season, and God bless you and keep you merry, and if any tale of mine can make you more jolly, why Thomas Buntley is not the one to say "No," that being quite contrary to his usual behaviour; which is remarkable for good manners and comely conduct. It is a story about himself which Thomas Buntley is about to tell. He'll vouch for the truth of it, and if any man from St.-6 up to 12st.-8 dares to deny it, T. B. will be glad to prove his word before the face of Europe. When put up, T. B. is a roused lion, and active. This story is about T. B.'s wife, and how he came by her. A man that can lift a sack of potatoes as easy as a new-born rabbit, is not the party to be trifled with. But it's Christmas time, gentlemen and ladies all, and that softens the heart. I am willing to confess I was out late last night, and—well, I don't mind saying it—T. B. had a very liberal Christmas-eve. But that is my business. May all your Christmas bills be paid, and never be brought up twice.

I'll go so far as to confess this—which, mind you, no force alive could have wrung from me, though it happened a year back, if I hadn't been so minded—that I was in some measure to blame. I certainly did go so far as to say that I expected the conduct of a gentleman to a gentleman from a gentleman, and Miss Mivers heard me say the words, and is willing to swear to them, if need be. Well, he wouldn't take it. He must make his remarks. "This is not the time for such discussions," said I; "you'll speak when you're spoken to, and until then remain unobserving," said I, cutting him short, for I hate obtrusiveness. Besides, I never will hear him abuse that sweet girl, who earns the very bread he eats. The man had been civil enough till then, and very gentlemanly.

Well, we all threw. Mine was a winner, being the highest. So far, so good; so they brought in the refreshments as ordered. But he wouldn't know his place. I gave him the best of advice, and said, "For your sister's sake, let bygones be bygones."

I was up in a minute, and after him as fast as I could put one leg before the other. He was a pretty runner, and might have done better if he had made it his profession; but that man never would take advice. And what is he now? He only knows too well, and so does Mrs. Pewters who, three days ago this time twelvemonths, offered to take five pounds and cry quits.

So they carried him home, and put him to bed. He wasn't much hurt; and after I'd forced his head twice into the pail, he partially recovered, and allowed his boots to be taken away. My only fear was, that she should return, for I was anxious to be favourable in her opinion—as good a girl as ever put a bonnet on, and worth 15s. a week every six days she worked.

Well, when she heard my story, she agreed with me that he was in the wrong. I must tell you I had sent for the goose, and she remarked it was a very fine bird, and thanked me very heartily for the present. I stayed there about an hour, and all the time he never moved. She accepted my invitation, and it was agreed that if the weather was propitious we should meet at four to the minute.

In these matters the least said is the soonest mended; so I was willing to take his hand, and did so. "Your conduct," I told him, very straightforward, "was not such as one gentleman expects from another gentleman; but at this season of the year I'll bear no malice." Then he paid what was due, and we went back to her.

You ought to be told, before you can perfectly understand this story, that the bugle and bead work was getting very slack, and that she was forced "to play" a good deal. He, too, being a victim to rheumatism, and a late riser, was out of work. Now, we had been remarkably busy. When I told Mr. Merridew—our second gentleman—I should be away for three days, he asked if my work was in, and then expressed himself agreeable. So they paid me the two pound sixteen, and I was as free as air. This suited me.

When I went there that evening, every thing was in a rumfus. Seeing how things were going on, a man had been put in, and Mrs. Pewters was drinking green tea in her own room, and prepared to stand by events.

I never liked her much, but when I offered her a pound down, she softened. He was very bad, upstairs, and I had relented a good deal, for I was—and I own it—much to blame, especially the pushing him down the milkman's steps. But my blood was up, and then I'm dreadfully vicious. So she asked, very complaisant, if I'd join her in a cup, and I paid the money.

When the man that was put in was taken out, she was most overcome by the act, and he was all gratefulness. "You never could keep a place, nor never will," I told him outright—just my way. He ever denied it, and his head being still inflamed wouldn't take a drop. She said she never had passed such a pleasant evening.

Well, I made it my express business to speak to Mr. Merridew about it, and he was taken on for wheel-painting, at which he is clever. Everything went on very agreeable for three days, and was most pro-

missing. That night I congratulated him, and spoke highly of his demeanour and proceedings. I never heard such thanks as she expressed herself of, for at this time she brought her work home, so we were much together.

The moment he asked me to become security, I gave a straightforward "No." "Begin at lilies and end at greats," I said. "That's all very well, but how can I make sure?" I remarked. She was on my side, and after all I had done for him, gave him a rebuke for not being more conscientious.

The appointment was made for that very mid-day, and true enough I saw Mr. Hearse, and signed the bill. He was most profuse with thanks, which it pained me to hear, but I told him I did it for her, and no remarks of his could conquer my esteem. Who would have thought that three weeks after this he would have missed an instalment?

She took on dreadfully. True, the back rent was paid. But rent is always going on; and if you pay the backs, why the forwards are advancing, and you should continually be prepared: at least I find it so, and I am only one in ten thousand.

She agreed, crying all the time, to everything I said. There were no hopes of him. It wasn't one glass nor three glasses, but a shopful of them. He wore out the hinges by his opening and shutting, and as Miss Mivers remarked, he didn't pay for the very chaik that was used for him. I was tired of nineteen here and fifteenpence there. "Let it end," as the observation I troubled the company with. Then he took on and went most abusive.

Time went on. One night he behaved most cruel to her, and as she wouldn't give him the shilling, he broke the chain, which cost half-a-crown in his father's time; and as I wasn't there, he went and pawned her work and sent her the duplicate. The shopman stated when I went for it, for he saw it was a bit of cheating. She said three shillings would keep her until she drew her earnings, and I arranged, once more, matters all comfortable and happy.

When Mrs. Pewters heard he had 'listed, what did she do but sweep the very bed from under her. The shop in Fox Alley which bought 'em, stuck it on in terrible style, and wanted twice the value. The little black profile of her mother, which, when new, was only sixpence bronzed, was asked two shillings for, a profit so very high, I was quite furious. After I had paid for the broken glass, I took the portrait home, and she showed me the lock of hair at the back, and I saw the fresh pomatum in it. A very pleasant evening.

The first floors—although very nice people, and well to do—got tired of letting her sleep on their sofa for such a long time. I was puzzled; so, as usual, I asked her to let me know how her business stood and speak fair and true, and so see what could be done.

She only heard from him twice since he was shipped for India. He wrote very strong and hearty, and gradually improving. He wrote in want of money which he would repay most faithful, but I stopped that.

By the time Mr. Hearse said "Thank you" to the last instalment, he had spent of my money more than thirty pounds. She never knew this, nor was it likely. The bugle and bead work had gone off dreadful bad, and she took to flowers and bonnets, at 4s. the dozen. I know she had very little sleep, because she said candles ruined her; but whenever I was by I never heard her grumble, but she'd give me a cup of tea, and whilst I smoked, would sing "Mo'her, is the battle over?" and "Wee, we have missed you," as sweet as balm.

Ever since I had sent her my bed and furniture as a present, I had been forced to sleep very uncomfortable. I missed the chairs, too, and the kettle especially. My clothes were kept in an empty barrel, so the drawers I could more easily spare. You see her room, being entirely empty, was quite dreadful to look at. When you're engaged at work, as I was, from six to six, furniture is only an extravagance. Besides, of an evening I was with her. The moment you fall asleep you might as well be in the blackest hole in Calcutta as in the handsomest drawing-room in Gray's Inn Lane. That's my philosophy; and it's as good as most of them that I've listened to.

Most every evening I was there, and very glad to see her so comfortable. The moment she began her thanks, I'd take up my cup and go; so, observing this—for she's remarkable quick in perceiving things—she forbore from being grateful. I was surprised to find how well my furniture became her room, and how she'd made the brass to shine and the copper to glimmer. The artificial flowers round the looking-glass were particularly handsome. I told her the prettiest flower on the glass was when she peeped into it; but I never said anything in that strain after that, for she was averse to compliments, and became very silent when she heard them, and ran the needle into herself a good deal if I said anything sprightly. So I made my conversation as commonplace as I could to accommodate her state of mind, and everything proceeded glossy as silk.

The man who let the rope slip said it was some one else's fault, but I got the beam on my shoulder, and in less than five minutes was lying on my back, as insensible as a sheep's carcass. There were four of them carried me to the hospital on our own No. 8 shutter. Then two of 'em wanted to cut my arm off, and two wouldn't have it touched. So the arm is on me now, and, except in wet weather, very handy.

So that spring, when the doctor had examined me, he says, "Bed 32, you'll soon be able to go about your business again." Then I had Port wine. After that they gave me meat. Then they said, "Next Friday," and I was agreeable.

It was very hard lying on my own mattress, continually on one side, to prevent my bad shoulder being hurt. It was dull, too, having no furniture to look at. When she first came to see me at my private lodgings (she came every day afterwards, the same as when I was in the hospital), she stared about her in amazement, for the place was as bare as a loft. She thought, said she, I was better to do than that. She ventured to remark that if she had known it, she would never have accepted the three truckful that were sent to her place. I was very weak, and it pained me to see her cry. I tried to rouse the lion in her; but there was no lion there—only lambs as gentle as herself.

The man that brought the furniture back, said he was paid, and was ordered to leave it; even so, and if necessary use force. So I paid for his beer, and sent him away very agreeable.

When she had arranged the room as it used once to be, she took to crying again. I refused to pardon her for returning them so cruel. I wouldn't allow her to call herself hard-hearted, or to permit her to be indulged so far as to style herself selfish. But I, with my sound arm round her waist, said that as I couldn't hear of her room being bare whilst mine was crowded, and as she was of the same mind, why shouldn't one room do for the two of us?

Mrs. Golong (belonging to Golong the whitesmith) was kind enough to call us very sensible people, and promised to act like a mother to her, and to give her away whenever need might be. That fine woman said: "Call me up at midnight, and I'm ready." We had six cups each, and then retired to rest.

Mr. Merridew, who is a gentleman, and behaves to a gentleman as a gentleman, gave us a wedding present, and I'm there now, painting coats of arms very rapid and correct for heraldry. She's all right, bless her, and the care she takes of that furniture of ours is beyond belief.

Then she put a sovereign in the letter and writes to him about it. But he has never answered, having died of a sun-stroke; neither has the sovereign been heard of since. His portrait is just over the tea-caddy, between the "Soldier's Departure" and the "Sailor's Return;" but I can't say it's like him, for the coat is too good and the hair too tidy. He swore dreadfully of late, the nose most remarkable.

She said with much feeling, "It's name shall be James, for that was his name, and his father's name before him;" so I let it be, and there he is James to this day, very fat and comfortable.

A. M.

THE ACADEMY PRIZES.—The medals of the Royal Academy have been awarded to William Holyoake, for the best painting from the living draped model; to Ebenezer Crawford, for the best drawing from life; to Charles Bell Birch, for the best model from life; to Frank Topham, for the best drawing from the antique; to Sydney G. Cameron, for the best model from the antique; and to Henry M. Eytton, for a perspective drawing.

CADDY GRAMPUS'S COLLECTION;

OR, THE VENGEANCE OF THE CRYPTOCONCHOID SIPHONOSTOMATA.

A TALK OF HORROR!

WHAT he could have been like as a boy—if he ever had been a boy at all—I can't imagine. He was the nastiest old man! Caddy Grampus! "What's in a name?" the poet asks; but I should like to know what there was in Caddy Grampus's name besides age, ugliness, ill-temper, and a hundred disagreeable things besides. His name looked, and read, and sounded quite as repulsively as did his person. The crabbedest old man!

By the way, he was exceedingly like a crab, both in his body and his movements. A body, round one way, convex the other; long, lazy arms, and legs with which he rather crawled than walked; an irresistible propensity for wriggling about on the seashore; and an inconceivable tenacity in grasping what he had laid hold of; so far he was thoroughly crablike. He was generally addicted, too, to wearing nankeen and gingham clothing, of a pale, parboiled, washed-out buff or pink hue; but there his resemblance to a crab ended. Nobody but the disagreeable old fellow he was could have had that intolerable old countenance. Besides, he took immoderate quantities of snuff, a practice to which I have not yet heard that crabs have devoted themselves. Some people said that his face was like a Nuremberg nutcracker, so carved, and notched, and twisted was it into wrinkles and gashes. Others declared stoutly that it resembled nothing so much as a cane-bottomed chair, because the surface of the skin was all holes and knots. He was always prowling about the neighbourhood of the sea. Caddy Grampus; yet the proverb of "the nearer the church," &c., might well have applied to him, for it was as strenuously believed in the port of Liverpool that Caddy Grampus never washed, as that the Manchester people were ill-bred rogues, and Liverpool itself the pink and pride of sea-ports, under the tutelary protection of that long-legged, but most unlikely bird, the Liver.

Caddy Grampus lived in Liverpool sixty years since. No St. George's Hall then, no colossal railway-station, no grand Exchange and Custom-house, no Huskisson's statue or palatial sailors' home. A grimy, hard-working town, thriving more and more every year, and somewhat suspected of not having quite given up a *penchant* for the slave-trade. Caddy Grampus had been a supercargo in the West Indian trade; then a ship-broker in the Gorse Piazzas; then a provision-merchant in Dale Street; then an "African agent" on a large scale. I am certain the old sinner had dealings in ebony flesh and blood, in addition to gold-dust, palm-oil, parrots, and elephants' teeth. He said he hadn't—that he had never bought or sold a negro in his life. But who was to believe him? He was the wickedest old man.

He had retired from business long since, and was reported to be immensely wealthy. He shook his crabby old head and denied, snarlingly, that he was worth a penny; but I wouldn't take his word. He dwelt in a dingy old house in St. Nicholas Lane—a boarded-up-windowed house, with a flight of steps in front, where he would sometimes sit on summer evenings, smoking a pipe of very rank tobacco, and comforting his wicked old waistcoat-linings with copious libations of cold rum-and-water, mixed strong. He never offered anybody to partake of his refreshment. He never, if he could help it, passed the time of day to any body. He never gave away a penny to a beggar or a bone to a dog; he kicked and culled them, did Caddy Grampus. He was the surliest, nastiest, ugliest, grumpiest old curmudgeon that ever existed—a sort of medium between the Old Man of the Mountain and John Elwes the miser.

Yet he had his weaknesses, Caddy, though he was as hard as a flint, and avaricious enough to skin it. He was an insatiable collector of Crustacea. I had, in the dingy, boarded-up-windowed house quite a notable museum of crabs and lobsters, of astonishing size, and tamed, so the tickets appended to them said, in their lifetime for extraordinary voracity. Right up at the top of the house was Caddy Grampus's collection, and in a suite of four rooms, in glass cases, many-shelved, reaching from floor to ceiling, nay in presses cumbering the floor, so that you had scarcely room to turn, were his carefully dried and polished crustacean preparations. He had specimens of the Podophthalma, which, as you may not be wholly aware, have perunculated eyes, and verigiform extremities, partially prehensile and partially ambulatory. He had specimens of the Decapoda, such as the Brachyura (Cancer, Portunus, Grapsus), of the Anomura (Dromia, Ranina, Pagurus, &c.); and of the Macrura (Astacus, Scyllarus, Palaeon, &c.). In Stomatopoda he was not so wealthy, having only a few samples of Mysis, Phyllosoma, Squilla, and the like.

No British collector, however, could equal Caddy Grampus for his Edriophthalma, his Branchiopoda (of course you know that they have the thoracic extremities lamellar); his Eneomestraca, also, were worthy the attention of the curious; and his Araneiformes, Py-onegonia Nymphs, and edentated Lerdiformes, had gained favourable suffrages from the most eminent crustacean connoisseurs. In fossil specimens, even of the Trilobite type, he possessed some organic remains in a fine state of preservation; in short, such a collection of shelly creatures, with their innumerable antennae, their horns and pincers, their carapaces and oviducts, their pulpi and vesicular respiratories, their branchiae and compound eyes, their lenticular bodies and gegarine lamellations, had never been seen before, and has never been seen since in the county of Lancaster, or in the Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland. Caddy Grampus was visited by the most distinguished members of the scientific world, native and foreign. He corresponded with Professor Kozarsko-wyckesky, of the University of Cracow, and as the Professor wrote in Polish, and Caddy in (in different) English, and as neither understood the other's language, much benefit to science must have resulted from their interchange of ideas. Doctor Van der Hoogenstraet came all the way from Leyden to inspect Caddy's collection; and the collector declared that the doctor did not come at dusk, wrapped in a horseman's cloak for nothing, and that he made a desperate attempt to seize and carry away the claw of the Astacus Atrox. But why didn't Caddy cry thieves, or indict the knavish doctor at the sessions? that is what I should like to know. I think Caddy feared publicity, and that some ugly stories relative to the mode in which he acquired his prize specimen of the Gegaremus Vorans might have come to light, between sessions and 'sises.

The disagreeable old fellow was miserly to the extreme in everything else, almost denying his household the necessities of life; but in purchasing additions to his collection he was speculative, liberal, lavish, almost generous. Mates of vessels trading to foreign parts, masters of fishing-smacks that ventured so far as the North Sea, had standing commissions to bring home any remarkable specimens of shellfish with which they might meet during their cruises for Caddy Grampus's account, and at a fair price. He was always hankering about the vessels in the port, tampering with the sailors as to any strange fish they had seen. Cases and barrels, containing hideously-smelling crustacea, were continually being consigned to him. But one thing was wanting to his happiness. He had never as yet been able to procure a specimen of the CRYPTOCONCHOID SIPHONOSTOMATA, a monstrous crustacean, of the size, so travellers said, of the Lord Mayor's Man of Brass, which was supposed to haunt the South American coasts, and was most frequently to be met with in certain bays and inlets in the Brazils. Vainly, time after time, had Caddy endeavoured to bribe, to induce, captains of merchantmen to bring him home the desiderated shellfish. They all said they had sought, but that they could not find. The Cryptoconchoid Siphonostomata was to Caddy Grampus as a red swan, a blue diamond, a black tulip, a four-leaved shamrock, or a roc's egg.

At home in the dingy house, the collector had a Wife, whose principal occupations were to dust the glass cases in the museum, and to cry her eyes out. The first I mean literally, and the act was decidedly against her will. She hated lobsters save in salad, and could not "abide" crabs under any circumstances. The second statement is to be taken metaphorically, and the act was a voluntary one. Nobody could tell why Lucy Morell, who was young and pretty, should have married such an unfavourable specimen of humanity as Caddy Grampus. It couldn't have been for love; nobody could ever have loved him. It

could scarcely have been for his money, for he grudged her even the necessary funds to keep house with, and made no secret of his intention to leave his collection, and "all the rest of it"—that meant his wealth of course—to government. You see that there is nothing new under the sun, not even a Sir John Stowe or a Mr. Angerstein.

And, besides, which renders the affair still more mysterious, Lucy oughtn't to have been married to Caddy Grampus at all; it for no other reason than for this, that she had been engaged for years to Tom Scargill. Tom was a distant connection of Caddy Grampus—a sort of tenth cousin—and was believed to be the only relative the old man had on earth. He, for his part, testified his sense of his consanguinity by cheating Tom out of his inheritance; for he had been left guardian to him, and trustee of a very nice little property bequeathed by the lad's father. But Caddy Grampus made out that the elder Scargill owed him money, and that there were debts and mortgages, and so forth, and lawyer Fennell was called in, and then they took it to Lancaster before the Chancellor of the Duchy, and even to London town, where some gentlemen in wigs were going to commit young Tom to jail for contempt, though, goodness knows, he was as respectful a young fellow as you would wish to meet, and always touched his cap to the clergyman. The end of it was, that Caddy Grampus got all, and Thomas Scargill nothing. The young man, almost broken-hearted, almost despairing, went away from Liverpool, too wretched even to bid farewell to his sweetheart. Of course, people said that he had run away, and that Teazum, the beadle, wanted him. Don't you believe people. At the end of two years, not making his appearance, it began to be noised about that Tom Scargill was dead—a report which Caddy Grampus surlily encouraged, stating even that he had read the account of his death, by drowning, at Jamaica, in the "Public Advertiser." So it was the story of Janet and auld Robin Gray over again without the romance; and somehow—I can't make out how these unequal matches are made—Lucy Morell became the bride of old Caddy Grampus.

She had been married some twenty months, when, on a bleak afternoon at the end of the year, she sat at one of the three windows of the dingy house that were not boarded up, looking dully and cheerlessly into Nicholas Lane. She thought of her blighted youth—of her dead and scathed love. Her heart reproached young Tom for a moment for never writing to her; but a thousand reasons, she acknowledged, might have prevented him—and in a moment she forgave him. Had she not, too, been false to her truth? She thought of her cross and churlish mate. How he stinted her for money; how he made her slave at dusting the cases of that eternal museum; she had but just now concluded her daily task, and the grim crustacea, with their distended claws and antennae, and their "compound eyes," terrified her meek spirit. She thought upon his overbearing and vexatious temper, and on how he threatened to "nip" her—the old man-crab—if she did not do his bidding. Oh! he was an ugly customer, Caddy Grampus.

It was growing dark, and Nicholas Lane was almost deserted, when Lucy's attention was attracted to the form of a stranger, who, leaning against one of the houses opposite, was staring with most unaccountable persistency at the very window where she was sitting, and, as it seemed, in at the very pane through which she was looking. He stared so long and so fixedly, that Lucy at last, through sheer feminine curiosity, of course, could not refrain from opening the window just one little morsel—the glass was so dusty and dim—and gazing out on the stranger herself. She did not faint, she did not scream—she had never been a girl given to screaming or fainting; but she drew back suddenly, her hands clasped, her cheek blanched, her lip quivering, her whole frame trembling. The stranger's face was bronzed, his form was burly, his apparel was that of a sailor just come home from a voyage; but Lucy could not forget the eyes, the ported smiling lips, just showing the white teeth. Not dead! not dead! thank heaven! It was young Tom Scargill.

But she, alas!—History is silent as to how long Lucy kept the window open, whether she approached it again or not, and whether the sun-burnt and resuscitated Tom Scargill remained staring at the dingy house from over the way all night. I only hope that Mrs. Grampus was not so imprudent as to run down stairs, open the door, hurry down the steep steps, cross the lane with three bounds, and fling herself sobbing into her old love's arms, entreating her dear, dear, dearest Tom to forgive his unhappy Lucy. Such things would never do in a well-ordered community, you know; besides, Caddy Grampus would have "nipped" his wife fiercely had he known about it. The old "Rooshian!"

This, however, history can be sufficiently eloquent about, and it is certain that all Liverpool talked enough about the matter for days and weeks together, to remove anything like a doubt respecting the authenticity of this relation. Exactly two years and one day from the evening when Lucy was sitting so mournfully at her window, and the sunburnt sailor was gazing with such intensity thereof, she changed her name of Grampus for the far more euphonious appellation of Scargill. The thing was done with the full approbation of her relatives and friends, with the connivance (for a consideration) of the District Registrar of Marriages, and with the sanction of the ecclesiastical authorities as represented by the parson and his clerk within the communion rails of old St. Nicholas church, Liverpool, assembled. Thomas Scargill, bachelor, was married to Lucy Grampus, widow, and everybody, like the gallant admiral in the ballad of "Billy Taylor," when they "came fore to hear o' it," "very much applauded what she'd done."

But how came it all about? How did Lucy become haply a widow? How did she get rid of that uncomfortable Caddy? You shall hear. The first astonishing thing was, that Mr. Grampus didn't come home to Nicholas Lane the night of Tom's re-appearance. The second astonishing thing was, that the collector didn't come back to the dingy house for a whole year. The third—and most astonishing—thing was, that he never came back at all!

The last that was ever seen by the Liverpudlians of Caddy Grampus was on that same wintry afternoon so often alluded to. He was seen to go into the "Weevil and Biscuit," an ho-tel much frequented by mariners, and close to George's Dock, in company with John Logg, commonly called "Mahogany Jack," boatswain of the good ship *Lobscouse*, and that same good ship sailed, notwithstanding the wintry weather, that very evening from the Mersey to the Brazils.

Now thirteen months being gone and past, the *Lobscouse*, with a considerable amount of barnacles added to her keel, cast anchor again in the Mersey, and "Mahogany Jack," still boatswain of that good ship, coming on shore in the pinnace, and hailing to recruit exhausted nature at the "Weevil and Biscuit," made his way straight to the dingy house in Nicholas Lane, where Lucy dwelt in a state of doubtful widowhood—though with a comforter in the shape of her mother—I hope that seafaring young Thomas coming home from his Belfast voyages (he was in that trade now), was never invited to tea, and never stayed supper—and that then and there the same "Mahogany Jack," did deliver to the amazed Lucy the following astounding narrative and relation of facts; setting forth, imprimis:

How the facts were all true, and could be vouched for by the captain and crew of the *Lobscouse*, as set down in writing and witnessed before the British consul at Rio, and others his Britannic Majesty's representatives in the Spanish Main.

How Caddy Grampus, meeting with "Mahogany Jack," as before explained, and questioning him as to the existence of any remarkable specimens of shellfish in the latitudes he had visited, had been by him informed of the whereabouts of a certain monstrous crustacean called the "hog-in-armour" lobster, which was to be seen alive in the bay of Alapaxameda, forty miles south of Rio di Janeiro, and to the number of innumerable myriads; a lobster which was currently reported among the crew to have size and strength enough to swallow a Lifeguardsman whole, jack-boots, sabre, pigtail and all.

How Caddy Grampus pressed him, both by offers of pecuniary reward and by passionate entreaties, extending even to tears, to undertake the capture of one of these monstrous lobsters, saying that it was a cryptosomething or other, with a very long tail, which he, "Mahogany Jack," could not remember, and for which he said he would

give all he was worth, even to his collection. How Jack unwillingly declined all these offers, knowing, from the notorious ferocity of the fish, the utter impossibility of the task, and not wishing to pledge himself to its performance under false pretences. How in a fit of enthusiasm, increased perhaps by his continuous replenishment of his bumper of cold rum-and-water, Caddy Grampus declared that if the "hog-in-armour"—but he called it by its long name—could not be brought to him, he would go himself to the "hog-in-armour," and, braving an eight or nine months' voyage out and in, would take passage in the *Lobscouse*. How he at first expressed a desire to return home, settle his affairs, make his will, and, as he expressed it, "just give that wife of his a good 'nip,'" but being told that the *Lobscouse* was even then preparing to work out of dock, he caused himself to be conveyed on board, in an extraordinary state of enthusiasm, rum, and a wherry, made terms at once with the captain, and started that very night.

Well!

Well, according to "Mahogany Jack's" solemn asseveration, he was conveyed to his destination, and at his special request was rowed in one of the ship's boats to a jutting groin of rock in the bay of Alapaxameda.

Well!

It is too horrible, too dreadful, but confound him! he was the wickedest old man, and the truth shall out.

Caddy Grampus fell a victim to the strength and ferocity of the *Cryptoconchoid Siphonostomata*, which resorted in shoals to the bay of Alapaxameda. The horrified mariners watched him from the boat, pottering with his creels and spears on the rock. They saw him make a false step, disappear with a shriek in the white surge, then reappear, battling with legions of those gigantic crustacea. They saw the last struggle, the ensanguined wave—as "Mahogany Jack" said, with terrible brevity—

"THE 'OGS IN HARMOUR HATE 'IM HUP."

Caddy Grampus died intestate, and the depositions of the crew of the *Lobscouse* being admitted as proof of his death, his widow administered to his estate. She sold the collection for a round sum, though much below its scientific value, to Mytheer Cornelius Van Swammerdam, agent to the museum of Spitzbergen. The widow and Thomas lived long afterwards, and very happily, on the proceeds: although there were not wanting censorious and envious people, who declared that the story of Caddy Grampus's voyage to Brazil, and his conflict with the *Cryptoconchoid Siphonostomata* was all fudge; that he was in reality spirited away by a press-gang, that he afterwards deserted his ship at Barbadoes, took to evil marine courses, as he had formerly done to bad land ones, and was hanged for piracy, at Execution Dock, in 1803. Be it as it may, he was the worst old man, and any fate served him perfectly right.

G. A. SALA.

BOOKS FOR CHILDREN.

The Young Middy. By C. ARMSTRONG. London: Griffith and Farran.

HARRY BARLOW is an ex-midshipman. He has left the service because his father, who has just inherited a large fortune, is anxious that his only son should live with him at home in quietness and ease. The father, however, has himself led by no means a peaceful existence; and while a captain in his Majesty's navy appears to have given offence to some sailor, who afterwards takes his revenge on the captain's son, Harry Barlow, and his cousin, Alfred Hammond, having gone out for a quiet cruise in a yacht, happen to fall in with an English privateer, which turns out to be under the command of the discharged sailor before mentioned. This worthy no sooner discovers that Harry is the son of his old enemy, Captain Barlow, than he resolves to detain him a prisoner on board his vessel. After various perils by sea, the boys at last land themselves prisoners in France. But they succeed in escaping from their place of confinement by the chimney, and are making their way towards the coast, when they fall in with a party of royalists, who are about to join the army of the "whites." In a fight between the "whites" and the "blues," Harry Barlow is wounded, and both the boys are taken prisoners by the republicans, and sentenced as English spies to be guillotined. In their second prison, our juvenile heroes meet a young gentleman named Roderick Magnus O'Moore, who turns out to be an old schoolfellow of theirs, and who has been almost as great a hero as themselves. Of course no one is guillotined, and ultimately the heroes in chief get married, while the hero in second sees a young lady in the street who inspires him with a peculiar feeling, which we have no doubt led to matrimony. The book is crammed full of incident, and we believe incidents are just what children like.

Paul Blake; a Boy's Perils in Corsica and Monte Christo. By ALFRED ELWES. London: Griffith and Farran.

PAUL BLAKE, a little English boy, had been left an orphan in Italy. A few days before the time fixed for his return to his native land, under the care of Mr. Freeman, the representative of his guardian, he went out in a boat from Leghorn, and fell into the hands of a band of mutineers, who were proceeding in their felucca to Monte Christo. Here Paul Blake meets with various hardships, and is ultimately shut up in a cave, from which he, of course, extricates himself. Among the mutineers Paul had found one friend, Signor Rossi, who was in due time murdered by the mutineers, while their commander, Signor Giorgio, is burnt alive. A party of sailors, who have been sent in pursuit of the mutineers, take Paul away from Monte Christo, and deposit him in Corsica, where they assure him he will find hospitality merely for the trouble of asking for it. He does in effect meet with excellent friends, and one of those, named Mando, performs all sorts of good services for him, and at last saves his life. On one occasion, a house in which Paul happened to be caught fire, and the boy would infallibly have been burned to death, had he not, with precocious sagacity, sought refuge in the wine-cellar. The cellar was of stone, and when the ruins fell with a crash, Paul remained intact in his hiding-place. At last he is dug out by the faithful Mando, and soon after he returns the attention by rescuing Mando's bride from the power of a ferocious bandit. Soon after, Mr. Freeman turns up in Corsica, and takes the young man to England, where he meets his little sister and feels happy.

Mr. Elwes's story is interesting, though the mere skeleton of it, which is all we are able to give, will not appear very remarkable. The descriptions of nature in Corsica are also deserving of much praise. The author appears to know the island well, and he informs us that it was during a recent journey in the South of Europe that he obtained the materials of his story. We must not forget to mention that the book is illustrated by Mr. Anelay.

Christmas Plays. By THYRESE PUTZKY.

MADAME THERESA PUTZKY has certainly produced some very pleasant little plays for children. The dramas are founded on Eastern and other tales, and are written in blank verse. The diction is well suited to young persons, being neither too grand nor too familiar, and the construction is as simple and intelligible as could be desired. Several songs are introduced, for which appropriate music is furnished in an appendix. Some of the airs are written for a soprano, others for a contralto voice, but all are easy, and the melodies of some of them are really very pretty. The book also contains coloured drawings of the principal characters, as they were intended to be represented on the stage; so that altogether this little work, unpretending as it is, is very complete.

OFFICERS' MESS.—The Secretary of State for War has directed that the contribution for messing to be paid by officers of all arms of her Majesty's service, including officers of the cavalry and staff officers, for the entire passage to and from India to this country, whether proceeding by the overland or by the sea route, be fixed at the uniform rate of £3 for each officer. Officers travelling by sea, viz.:—Between India and the Cape of Good Hope, New South Wales, Mauritius, £3 2s. 6d. each. Between India and Ceylon, 10s. 8d. each. In the case of an officer who receives an allowance to find his own passage, no such stoppage is required.

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